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THE VOICE FROM SINAI

THE ETERNAL BASES OF THE MORAL LAW

BY

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TO MY SONS

REGINALD, ERIC, PERCIVAL, AND IVOR

AND TO THE BRIGHT BELOVED

MEMORY OF THEIR BROTHER

CYRIL

I DEDICATE THESE SERMONS ON

THE ETERNAL BASES OF

THE MORAL LAW

PREFACE.

ALL but three of the following Sermons were delivered in Westminster Abbey during my terms of residence as Canon in November 1891 and January 1892.* I am encouraged to yield to the request for their publication for two reasons: first, because they were listened to week after week by crowded congregations; secondly, because I learnt, from trustworthy sources, that they had been found profitable by many of those who heard them. The number of young men who were content to stand for hours in the transepts of the Abbey in order to hear them was unusually large, and my sense of responsibility in delivering them was greatly increased by the fact that they had awakened the interest of so important a section of the community. The letters which reached me from youths and young men, who were entire strangers to me, showed that some hearts had been

* The second Sermon was delivered before the University of Oxford, at St. Mary's, in 1874; and the last in St. Margaret's, Westminster.

touched by them and some consciences awakened. A further indication that they were likely to be useful was furnished by the fact that, after about half of them had been printed (apart from any wish of mine) in the *Christian World Pulpit*, the discontinuance of the reports at my request brought to the editor many letters, especially from workingmen, in which the writers urged him to continue furnishing these Sermons to his readers. I may therefore indulge a humble hope that they may be of service to a much wider range of hearers than can be reached even from the pulpit of the great Abbey.

I have consulted many of the books and treatises which have been published on the Ten Commandments. The needs of each generation are so widely different, that from many of the ancient and mediæval expositions I have gained little or nothing. Much that is useful will be found in the works of Bishop Andrewes, Archbishop Leighton, Bishop Hopkins, and Dr. Isaac Barrow. Of modern books I found none more suggestive than those of Prof. F. D. Maurice, Dr. R. W. Dale, and Dr. Washburn of New York. Admirable notes on Exodus xx. 1 to 17 may be found in Dr. Kalisch's "Commentary on Exodus" and in the Rev. S. Clark's contributions to the "Speaker's Commentary" (ii. 335 to 368). Whenever I have bor-

rowed from these or other authors I have acknowledged the obligation.

No one, I trust, will regard as needless the texts with which I have prefaced each Sermon. I attach the highest importance to them, and I am convinced that the truth which they teach with such solemnity and iteration is constantly overlooked. In almost every instance I quote from the Revised Version, and sometimes from the marginal renderings. In many cases the Revised Version surpasses the Authorized in beauty; in all cases it is superior to it in accuracy; in not a few it throws a flood of new light on passages obscured, and sometimes even misrepresented, by the looser and less correct renderings of the translation of 1611.

I pray that God may bless all that is true or right in this little book to the hearts of all who read it.

F. W. FARRAR.

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BOOKS ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Philo, "De Decem Præceptis," Opp.

St. Thomas Aquinas "Summa Theologiæ," 1a, 2ae, qu. 3-9 (Migne, "Patrologia," Opp. ii. 771 *seqq.*).

Bonaventura, Opp. vii. 1.

Jean Gerson, Opp. i. 425.

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Bishop Andrewes, 1630, "Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine," and other minor works (ed. Oxford, 1846).

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E. A. Washburn, "The Social Law of God," 1874, 3d edition, New York.

Stanley Leathes, "The Foundations of Morality," 1882.

INTRODUCTION.

"My hands will I lift up to Thy commandments, which I have loved, and my study shall be in Thy statutes."—Ps. cxix. 48.

INTRODUCTION.

1. IT is impossible to exaggerate the importance and interest of the Ten Commandments. They are not only the earliest historic code which has come down to us, but also the most profound and the most comprehensive.* As we study their peculiarities we shall see that they bear on their face clear evidences of their divine origin; and that in spite of their consummate brevity they stand unsurpassed by any body of laws in the history of the world. "They contain," says Dr. Kalisch, "the primary basis of revelation, and the fundamental laws of the whole Mosaic legislation. They have therefore become the starting-point of all religious systems and of all true civilizations, and only from their promulgation dates the diffusion of a genuine monotheism, a purely internal morality, and a sound enlightenment. They mark a decisive epoch in the history of the human race, and are therefore perhaps the greatest and most important

* Renan will be, on this subject, an unsuspected witness. He says: "La fortune incomparable qu'a eu cette page, devenue le code de la morale universelle, n'a pas été imméritée. . . . Les dix paroles de Jahve sont pour toutes les nations et seront durant tous les siècles les commandements de Dieu."—"Hist. du Peuple d'Israel," ii. 297–403 (comp. i. 84). The antiquity of the code appears in the allusions of the earliest prophets (Hos. viii. 12; xiii. 4).

event in universal history. In simple and condensed, yet extremely emphatic form, equally impressive for every degree and manner of intellectual culture, a complete system of duties is comprised, which man owes to his Creator and his fellow-men; and so comprehensive is the purport of these words that, from the earliest times, the whole series of the divine precepts has been considered to be included in them as in an embryo." * For this reason they are called "fundamentals of the faith"; and, regarding all ritual ordinances as mere protections and developments of the ideas contained in them, Rashi calls them "the pillars of the Law and its roots." †

2. Although they occupy less than a page of the Book of Exodus, Moses by an emblem of singular beauty and significance indicated that they were the very heart and kernel of his whole elaborate system

* "Exodus," p. 338.

† Rashi, on Ex. xxiv. 12; Kalisch, *l.c.* It does not militate against these eulogies that the moral law of Sinai, written on the tables of stone, was, as Bishop Andrewes points out, a promulgation of the law always written on the fleshen tables of the heart. Thus (he says) we have all the Ten Commandments in Genesis:—

The First, Gen. xxv. 2.
The Second, Gen. xxxi. 34.
The Third, Gen. xxiv. 3.
The Fourth, Gen. ii. 3.
The Fifth, Gen. xxvii. 41.
The Sixth, Gen. iv. 9.
The Seventh, Gen. xxxviii. 24; xxxiv. 31.
The Eighth, Gen. xliv. 7.
The Ninth, Gen. xxxviii. 20.
The Tenth, Gen. xii. 7; xx. 3.

of legislation, which as a ceremonial was in itself wholly valueless, and derived its sole importance from its destined function as "a hedge for the law." * Into that one symbol Moses compressed all that was deep and divine in the revelation which he had received.

The symbol was this:

In the centre of the camp, representing the inmost ideal centre of the whole national life, was reared "the tabernacle of witness," which was regarded as the visible sign of God's presence in the midst of His people.

In the thick darkness of the Holy of Holies, which occupied the farthest recess of that tabernacle, as afterwards of the Temple, was the ark of God. The tabernacle was hung with purple curtains; it was overlaid with fine gold; its outer court was filled with the smoke of sacrifices, its inner chambers with the fragrancy of incense: but, to teach Israel that ceremonial service apart from moral faithfulness is an

* See Riehm, "Handwörterbuch d. bibl. Alterthums," s.v. *Gesetz* i. 503. Kuenen, "Religion of Israel," i. 57–61. For Scripture confirmation of this position, I ask the reader to consider and reconsider —to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest—the following passages of the Old and New Testaments: Deut. x. 12; 1 Sam. xv. 22; Amos v. 21–23, viii. 5; Hos. ii. 11, vi. 6 (twice quoted by Christ, Matt. ix. 11–13, xii. 17), v. 7, vii. 11, xi. 12, xii. 6; Is. i. 4–17, iii. 14, 15, 16–23, v. 8–23, xxix. 19–21; Mic. iii. 9–11, vi. 6–8; Ps. li. 16; Prov. xxi. 3; Zech. xi. 4–6. In point of fact, as Kuenen says, to give a full view of this subject would be to transcribe a large portion of the best and earliest prophetic literature. The passages which insist on the same truth in the New Testament are no less numerous: Matt. v. 19, xxii. 40; Mark xii. 29; John xiv. 21, xv. 10; 1 Cor. vii. 19; 1 John ii. 4, iii. 24; 2 John 6, etc.

empty sham, the central sacredness of the shrine was concentrated round the tables of the Moral Law. The tabernacle was the most sacred thing in the encampment; the Holiest was the most sacred part of the tabernacle; the ark was the most sacred object in the Holiest; and yet the ark itself had no sacredness apart from the sacred thing which it enshrined—the tables, alas! the broken tables—of the moral law. When the High Priest passed into the Holy of Holies, entering as it were the very audience-chamber of the Almighty on the great Day of Atonement, he stood before no sculptured image, he gazed on no visible manifestation. When the astonished Roman general burst, nearly fifteen centuries afterwards, into the inmost shrine of the Temple, after the ark had been lost in the captivity, he saw to his amazement nothing but an empty space.* There was total darkness; no silver lamp shed dim radiance there; no ray of sunlight ever streamed into the Holiest; no whisper save of the Incommunicable Name thrilled its silence.† But by the gleam of his own glowing thurible, and through the smoke of the wreathing incense, the priest saw only the glimmering outline of a golden

* "Tac. Hist." v. 9. "Romanorum primus Gn. Pompeius Judæos domuit, templunque jure victoriæ ingressus est. Inde volgatum, nullâ intus deûm effigie, vacuam sedem et inania arcana." The phrase of Josephus ("Antt." i. 14, § 3) is characteristically different. When the ark was removed only the "foundation-stone" remained (Yoma, f. 53, 2).

† According to Jewish tradition, the High Priest uttered the true pronunciation of the name Jehovah on this occasion alone.

ark, overshadowed by the golden wings of adoring cherubim. Within that ark, as its priceless treasure, lay two rough-hewn tables of venerable stone—shattered, alas! as Moses had shattered them indignantly on the mountain crags when he witnessed the worship of the golden calf.* On these were carved the Ten Words of God's fiery law.† Those broken stones, that ark, that mercy-seat sprinkled with atoning blood, that awe-struck priest, those bending cherubim seen dimly through the glimmering fumes, represented guilty man before the merciful God whose law he had not kept. They proclaimed aloud, "There is forgiveness with Thee, therefore shalt Thou be feared." They were to a whole nation a symbol that the one end of all religion is simple righteousness. They were a visible emblem of all creation up to its highest celestial hierarchies looking down into the mysteries of God's holy will; bowing their heads with awful reverence to contemplate, as the basis of man's spiritual existence, the moral law of God, and as the sole source of his hope after transgression, the blood of atonement and the voice of prayer.

* Some of the Rabbis insisted that *both* the broken and the unbroken tables were in the ark, which they inferred fantastically from the repetition of the word Shem (name) in 2 Sam. vi. 2 (Bava Bathra, f. 14, 2); but they had difficulty enough in finding room for the broken tables only (Megillah, f. 10, 2).

† Deut. xxxiii. 2. The cherubim were a symbol of all created excellence, Ezek. i. 10; Midrash Shemoth, 23. Their wings formed the Propitiatory or Mercy-seat of the throne of the Shechinah, the glory-cloud of God's Epiphany.

3. Thus then the two Tables of the Covenant,* which contained "the words of the Covenant," were laid up in "the ark of the Covenant"; and as though they were pre-eminently, if not exclusively, the utterance of the Eternal, they were called "the Ten Words." † According to the Rabbis, they were the only words which God spoke, the rest of the law being delivered to Moses by "the ministry of angels." ‡

4. These titles given to the commandments involved two great conceptions: (i.) First, that they were a part, and the one eternal essential part, of a COVENANT (*Berîth*, *Diathēkē*). (ii.) Secondly, that they were a covenant between Israel and the God who had revealed Himself to them under the new name of JEHOVAH.

(i.) The word COVENANT, it need scarcely be said, plays a memorable part in the history of God's dealings with the chosen people. It is first found in

* Also, "of the Testimony." In 2 Kings xi. 12, another reading means "the bracelets." See Wellhausen, "Prolegomena to the Hist. of Israel," pp. 392–410. In the New Testament they are simply called "the commandments," Matt. xix. 17, etc.

† Ex. xxxiv. 28, Deut. iv. 13, x. 4; LXX., *οἱ δέκα λόγοι*, *τὰ δέκα ῥήματα*. Vulg. Decem verba. *Δεκάλογος* is first found in Clement of Alexandria.

‡ In Deut. v. 22, after the Ten Commandments, we read, "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly . . . and He added no more." See, too, Josephus, "Antt." iii. 5, § 4. He says that the words are so sacred that he does not dare to do more than express their import. The ministration of angels is mentioned in Acts vii. 53; Gal. iii. 19; Ps. lxvii. 18; Heb. ii. 2. In Deut. xxxii. 2, the LXX. render *ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ*. In Ps. lxviii. 12, the Rabbis read "angels" for "kings."

Gen. vi. 18, ix. 11. In the Old Testament there are four covenants: that with NOAH, of which the rainbow was the sign, promising safety from destruction to all mankind; that with ABRAHAM, of which circumcision was the sign; that with ISRAEL as a nation, of which the sign was the Passover; and that of which the Sabbath was the sign for all mankind. The record of the Mosaic law is called "the book of the covenant" (Ex. xxiv. 7). But the main covenants between God and man are two—the Mosaic and the Christian, the Law and the Gospel. Every one is aware that the name, "The Old and the New Testament" (Gal. iv. 24, *εἰσιν αἱ δύο διαθῆκαι*) is in point of fact founded on a mistake. It is derived from *testamentum*, the Vulgate rendering of the word *διαθήκη*. The word diatheke does not mean "a will," since such testamentary dispositions of property were wholly unknown to the Jews until they came in contact with the Romans:—it means a covenant.* And in the use of this term, "covenant," lay the essential conception of *reciprocity* between God and man. In heathen systems there is little or no trace of this view. It is true that in Judg. ix. 46 we read of El-Berîth, "the god of the Covenant" at Shechem, but there is nothing to show that this Canaanite shrine may not have been called after notions derived from the Is-

* *ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη*, Matt. xxvi. 28; Luke xxii. 20; Heb. vii. 22, viii. 6–8 (comp. Jer. xxxi. 31). The "holy covenant" of Luke i. 72 is the promise of the Messiah in the old dispensation, Acts iii. 25; "the covenant of circumcision," Acts vii. 8; Rom. ix. 4, xi. 27.

raelites, with whom the Shechemites had long been familiar. Hence the law of God is not a law of tyranny, of force, of self-interest. Man is clay, but he is not clay to be dashed about anyhow by the hands of the potter—for he is sentient clay.* Man is but a reed of the river, but he may not be slashed and trampled down at will by the great god Pan—for, as Pascal says, he is a thinking reed. The law of God, like all covenants, is based on the conception of reciprocity—of fatherhood and forgiveness on the part of God, of duty and repentance on the part of man.

(ii.) And this revelation of reciprocity in the relations between God and man is deepened and elevated by the new name JEHOVAH. "What are the numerous styles wherein princes delight and glory so much, but a vain noise of nothing in comparison of this name, I AM." †

There can be little doubt, in accordance with the distinct statement of Ex. iii. 13, 14, vi. 3, that the name was unknown to the Israelites generally before Moses. It is true that it occurs early in Genesis,‡ but in the face of the plain statement of Ex. vi. 3, we must either suppose that these introductions of the

* I cannot here stop to explain the grossly misapprehended scope of St. Paul's argument (Rom. ix. 19–29), on which the worst parts of Calvanism are based.

† Leighton.

‡ Gen. xv. 7, xxii. 16, xxii. 14, xxviii. 14. Schulz, Kuenen, etc., admit that in any case Moses revealed in the name a new significance. On the whole subject I must content myself with referring to an able paper by Prof. Driver in "Biblical and Ecclesiastical Studies," i. 1–20.

name are anticipations, adopted by the Jehovistic author from his own familiarity with it, or, as Ebn Ezra, Abarbanel, and the author of "Cusari" explain the fact, the name, though known, had never been previously understood. God had been called El, "the Powerful"; Eloah (only in poetry), "that which is feared"; Elohim, the plural of majesty; El Shaddai, "the Omnipotent";* Adonai, "the Lord, ruler, or owner":—but not JEHOVAH. The only proper name in which this designation of God—afterwards one of the commonest elements in Hebrew names—occurs before the time of Moses, is that of Jochebed, the mother of Moses (Ex. vi. 20). That name is usually supposed to mean "Jehovah is glory," but this interpretation is far from certain;† nor can any decided conclusion be drawn from the name Moriah.‡

(iii.) Moses then must be regarded as the revealer of this name, at any rate in its full significance; and only in the light of it can the Ten Words be truly appreciated. All attempts to prove that he learnt it from some extraneous source have conspicuously failed. It is certainly not Egyptian. Pharaoh truly

* Gen. xvii. 1, xxviii. 3. LXX. *παντοκράτωρ*; Aquila, *ἅλκιμος*; Vulgate, "Omnipotens." Compare the names applied to God in Job xxxvii. 23; Ps. lxxxix. 9, etc.

† See Nestle, "Eigennamen," 77. Dillmann, "Exod. Levit." 34.

‡ Gen. xxii. 8; 2 Chron. iii. 1. Moriah cannot mean grammatically "shewn of Jehovah." Some have supposed from the name Jochebed, and the expression "God of my father" (Ex. iii. 6, xv. 2, xviii. 4), that the knowledge of the name Jehovah was peculiar to the family of Moses. Wholly mistaken inferences have been drawn from Pharaoh's change of the name Eliakim into Jehoiakim (2 Kings xxiii. 34).

said, "Who is Jehovah? I do not know Jehovah" (Ex. v. 3).* Nor is it Phœnician, as Hartmann was misled to suppose, by relying on spurious fragments of Sanchoniathon. Nor is it Greek, for Iaô,† as the like of the Supreme, is simply a Gnostic reproduction of the name, and the connection between "Jehovah" and "Jove" is purely fortuitous. Nor can it be shown to be Assyrian. Though it is found on the Khorsabad inscription of Sargon, in the name of a king of Hamath, it may have been borrowed from Israel by neighboring nations. To trace the four-lettered name of God to a foreign source is, says Gesenius, a vain, frivolous, and resultless toil. If then it be of pure Hebrew origin, what is its derivation? In the eighth century before Christ it was universally regarded as a derivative of the verb "to be." Whether with some we derive it from the future of the Qal, the neuter conjugation,‡ or with others from the

* On the abyss which separates Egyptian religion from Mosaism, see Eisenlohr "Das Volk Israel," i. 34–54. To say nothing of the dubious age and uncertain authenticity of the inscription said by Plutarch ("De Is. et Os." 9) to have been carved in the shrine of Neith at Sais — "I am all that has been, and is, and shall be, and my veil no mortal yet uplifted"—it has no bearing on this question.

† Macrob. (Sat. i. 18) quotes as an oracle of Apollo of Claros, *φρῦζεο τὸν πάντων ὕπατον Θεὸν ἔμμεν'* ΙΑΩ, but the line is of Gnostic origin. This Greek origin is supported by Count Baudissin, "Studien zur Semit Religionsgesch.," 1876.

‡ Dillmann, Delitzsch, Kalisch, Gesenius, Lagarde, Schrader, Schenkel, Baudissin. The name would then mean, "He who made to exist" (*i.e.*, the Creator). Nestle; see Kittel, "Gesch. d. Hebräer" (Gotha, 1888), i. 216–228; Kuenen, "Rel. of Israel," E. T. i. 41 *seq.*

Hiphil (the causative conjugative), there is little doubt that the name implies the Eternity and the Immutability of God: "I am Jehovah, I change not," Mal. iii. 6. In this respect the name may be compared with the large wooden E (perhaps for EI "Thou Art"), which stood in the pronaos of the Delphian Temple.* The innermost significance of the name is involved in the utterance of the living creatures in Rev. iv. 8: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, which was, and which is, and which is to come."

The superstitions which gathered round the Tetragrammaton, the four letters of the incommunicable name JHVH, form a curious chapter in the history of religion and its aberrations. They do not belong to our subject, and may be relegated to a note. Nor is it of any importance that we can now never be sure in what way the name was properly pronounced.† What *is* of importance is the pure and lofty thought

* Kalisch collects some of the renderings or glosses, as, "I am that I am." LXX. *ἐγώ ἐιμι ὁ ὤν.* Aquila Theodor, *ἔσομαι ὃς ἔσομαι.* Vulgate, "Sum qui sum." Saadiah, "I am the Eternal, who never ceases." Targum of Jonathan, "He who spake and the world was." Maimonides, "He who exists by eternal necessity." Rashbam, "I am forever." Abarbanel, "I am the prime cause of existence." Albo, "I am because I am"—*i.e.*, "My existence depends only on myself" (*αὐτάρκης*). Mendelssohn, "Ich bin das ewige selbständige Wesen." Grammatically it may mean either "He that is" or "He that causeth to be" (the Creator). Others see in it the meaning "He that bringeth to pass"—*i.e.*, fulfils his promises.

† JHVH was called the Shem Hammephôrâsh, or "Revealed Name"; the Tetragrammaton, or name of four letters, and Shem, or "the Name." From Lev. xxiv. 16, the Rabbis assumed that to utter it in its true pronunciation was a capital crime, and therefore, for its

of the Deity which the name concentrated into itself, and which became a source of constant education to the backsliding Israelites. The heathen designations of the Divinity—Baal, Molech, Milcom—enshrined no view but that of God's power and man's abject dependence; and they were only local divinities, gods of the hills, or of the vales, or of each particular nation, whom in later days the Israelites regarded as mere idols, and either demons or nothings.* But the name Jehovah implied the ideas of help and love.† He is the moral governor of the world,‡ and Israel stood to Him in the relation not of a slave, but of a son. The revelation of Him excluded all the monstrous complications of polytheism, for even if the early Israelites recognized the existence of other gods, such as Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of Ammon,§ they stood so immeasurably be-

true vowels, whatever they were, they substituted the vowels of Adonai or of Elohim. The true pronunciation is said to have been lost after the return from the Captivity, though the secret may have lingered on among certain individuals. It was probably unknown to Josephus ("Antt." ii. 12, § 4) and to Philo ("De Vit. Mos." iii.). Modern scholars suppose that it was pronounced Jahveh, and it is quite certain that Jehovah is a wrong pronunciation. Gratz writes it Jhwh ("Gesch. d. Juden," i. 38–43). It is found in the inscription of King Mesha (line 18) on the Moabite Stone, B.C. 875.

* Hos. xi. 2; Is. x. 10, 11.

† Help in war (Ex. xiv., xvii.; Judg. v.; hence "the Book of the Wars of Jehovah"); and in the operations of nature (Ex. xiv. 24; Amos iv. 13, v. 8, ix. 9). The all-embracing activity of this Spirit is often alluded to by Isaiah, xi. 2, xxviii. 6, etc.

‡ Hos. xiii. 4; Is. xxxvii. 16, 20.

§ Judg. xi. 24; 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

low the Eternal as to be of no importance. The shameful degradations of nature-worship were no less excluded. All the names of Jehovah were those of the supremest exaltation. He is "Jehovah of Tsebaoth or Hosts," as He is called forty times in Isaiah alone—the hosts being the angels and the starry hosts of heaven. He is also called "God on High," and "who dwelleth solitary," "the exalted." * But the essential idea respecting Him is His holiness, and man's primary duty is to sanctify Him, because He is "the Holy One of Israel." † And thus the central meaning of His revelation is the majesty of the moral law as the expression of His will. The culmination of all His fatherhood and help consists in the fact that He gave statutes and ordinances unto Israel that they might observe His laws. ‡ His unapproachableness and awfulness did but enhance the solemn truth that He had made known His will towards men. Josephus said that in other systems virtue was made a part of religion, but in God's covenant with Israel religion was but a part of virtue. It would be truer to say that the two are inseparably united. In no other religion and in no legislation was there so full, so pure a spirit of freedom, charity, humanity, and nobleness;§ in no other religion was

* Mic. vi. 6, v. 14; Hos. xi. 7.

† Amos ii. 7, iv. 2; Hos. xi. 9, 12; Is. i. 4, vi. 3, xxix. 23.

‡ Ex. xv. 26; Jos. xxiv. 25.

§ Josephus, "Antt." ii. 9; "c. Ap." 1, 31; Kittel, "Sittliche Fragen," 131; "Gesch. der Hebräer," i. 216–228; Stade, "Gesch. Israel," i. 433.

it made so clear that the end of the law is to make men righteous, and that since no man can be righteous unless the grace of God prevent and follow him, he that doeth righteousness is born of God.

5. All the commandments depend on the first two, which proclaim the unity and the spirituality of God. Symbolism tends ever to idolatry, and idolatry to polytheism. It was impressed on Israel with reiterated emphasis that at Sinai "ye saw no manner of similitude, only ye heard a voice." *

6. It is the revelation of this one and changeless God of holiness which was the glorious purpose for which Moses was set apart. The knowledge of God came to him by revelation only. Neither in the debased and monstrous animal-worship of Egypt, with her cruel and one-sided civilization; nor among the orgiastic and sensual cults of any of the Asiatic Semites; nor among the depraved nature-worships of Canaan, which at once corrupted and degraded man; nor among the Kenites of Midian,† among whom he sojourned after his flight from Egypt—is there the least trace of any conception so pure and so noble as that which God manifested to Moses, when after his long years of meditation as he fed his flock in the lonely wilderness, he gazed on the bush which burned with fire, and was not consumed.

7. The Jews pointed out four respects in which

* König, "Das Bildlosigkeit des legitimen Jahvekultus," 1886. "Hauptprobleme," 53 ff. Dillmann, "Exod. Levit." 208.

† As Stade erroneously seems to think.

Moses was superior to all the prophets who succeeded him.*

(i.) God spoke to Moses, and to him only, face to face (Num. xii. 6, 7).

(ii.) He spoke to Moses not in nightly vision or apparition, but in broad day, between the cherubim (Ex. xxv. 22).

(iii.) In other prophets the divine presence inspired terror and prostration (Dan. viii. 18; x. 8, 9, 16), but God spoke to Moses as a man speaketh with his friend (Ex. xxx. 11).

(iv.) Moses alone was ready not only at special times (like Elisha, 2 Kings iii. 15), but at all times, to receive the inspiration of God (Num. ix. 8; Lev. xvi. 2; Siphri, *ib.*).

8. But the supreme glory of Moses was this: he made manifest to Israel and to the world the twofold revelation of (i.) the UNCHANGEABLE AND ETERNAL GOD, the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity; and of (ii.) the MORAL LAW as the expression of man's duty and God's will. The glory of Israel among the nations was the possession of this moral law under its eternal sanction.† We must, however, beware of the entirely futile notion that it was meant for Israel only.‡ It was meant to be, and from the

* Maimonides, "Yad ha-Chazaka," i. cap. 7. Weill, "Le Judaïsme," ii. 64–68.

† Deut. iv. 6, 8, vi. 25, xxvi. 17, 19, xxx. 12–19; Amos ii. 4; Mic. vi. 8; Hos. ii. 15, iv. 6, viii. 12; Ps. cxix.

‡ Justin Martyr falls into this error, *ὁ γὰρ ἐν Χωρὴβ παλαιὸς ἤδη καὶ ὑμῶν μόνον*, Dial. c. Tryph. p. 28; and Barrow follows him: "By the

first has been, a lesson for all mankind. The Jews said that this was the reason why the commandments were not delivered in Palestine, which belonged to Israel, but in the wilderness, which belongs to all the world.*

9. In what form was this great moral code graven on the tables of stone? It is well known that the commandments occur in two different forms—in Ex. xx. 1–17, and Deut. v. 6–21.† The variations are unimportant, but, as BOTH forms cannot be the original, and as the divergences mainly occur in the annexes or appendices to the commandments, it seems clear, on this ground alone, that on the two tables they were carved in their simplest and shortest form.‡ Not only would this minimize the difficulty of Moses in carving them on stone at all, but otherwise the size of the tables would have rendered it impossible to enclose them in the narrow space of the ark. Further, it was only in their briefest form that they would have been best suited for retention in the memory of every Israelite.§

introduction thereto and some passages therein, especially as it is delivered in Deuteronomy, it seemeth particularly to concern the Jewish nation."—"Expos. of Decalogue" (Works, vi. 474).

* "Mechilta to Jethro," s. 1.

† Compare Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. The words "that it may go well with thee" occur in the fifth commandment in Deut. v. 16, but not in Ex. xx. 12; and one Rabbi accounted for this by saying that if the word "tôb" (good) had been on the first broken table, goodness would have departed from Israel (Bava Kama, f. 55, i.).

‡ See Ewald, "Gesch. d. Volkes Israel."

§ This argument receives remarkable practical illustration from the

It is strange that they have been always, indeed, divided into ten, but in no less than four different ways. This arises from the fact that the exact division is nowhere stated in the Bible.

(i.) The division first found in St. Augustine*—which is universal in the Western Church, and retained even in the Lutheran—adds the second commandment to the first (and in some forms fatally omits the second altogether).† It splits the tenth into two, making "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife" the ninth commandment.‡

(ii.) Among many of the Jews, who follow the authority of the Targum of Palestine, and various Jewish doctors,§ the first commandment is not a commandment at all, but the prefatory declaration: "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt."

fact that in most Catechisms they are abbreviated. Mr. Clark in "Speaker's Commentary," i. 337, refers to Sulp. Sev. *Hist.* i., Ps. Athanas., *Synops. Sacr. Script.*, Suidas, s. v. *πλαξίν*, King Alfred's Laws, the Lutheran and Douai Catechisms, and that of the Greek Church.

* "Quæst. in Exod." 71.

† But St. Thomas Aquinas, 1, 2, qu. 7, rightly points out that the first commandment pertains to faith, and the second to worship.

‡ "Wife" comes before "house" in the LXX. (Ex. xx. 17, and in Deut. v. 21), but not in the Hebrew. The same arrangement prevailed in the British Church, and in King Alfred's Laws.

§ Maimonides, Ebn Ezra, etc. Jerome regards this division as possible, and it is adopted by Cyril and Clement of Alexandria. Theophilus, "Ad Autol." iii. 9 (comp. ii. 354, 35), is a little vague. In the former passage he omits the fourth commandment, on which he lays stress in ii. 12. Geffcken (Hamb. 1838) has a full treatise on the subject.

(iii.) In some versions (*e.g.*, the LXX. in the Vatican text) the order of some of the commandments is transposed (*e.g.*, the sixth and seventh).

(iv.) But the order adopted in the Eastern Church and our own, and in most of the Reformed Churches, is unquestionably the most authoritative and forcible, and has the testimony of Philo and Josephus, of Origen and Jerome.

10. As to the arrangement of the commandments on the tables, some would place the first four on the first table, and the last six on the second. Considerations of symmetry would suffice to prove that such an arrangement could never have been adopted, and that the tables contained, as Philo says, two pentads.* It is no valid objection to this view that thus a commandment involving our duty towards man (our parents) stands on the first table as part of our duty towards God. The explanation given hereafter of the fifth commandment will suffice to show that filial duty

* Δύο πεμπάδες. This is demanded by what Philo calls (§ 6) "harmonic proportion." (He calls the tables "two pillars.") So, too, Josephus ("Antt." iii. 5, § 8), "When he had said this he showed them the two tables with the Ten Commandments engraven upon them, five upon each table." This is the view of Irenæus, Origen, Jerome, and other Fathers, and many high modern authorities. Considerations of symmetry had the utmost importance in ancient days, and no doubt the number of fingers of the hand led to the common ancient division into fives and tens. The highest laws of Buddhism are ten in number (Neumann, "Catech. of the Shamans," 18, 31). We find from Homer (Od. iv. 412), and Plutarch ("De Is. et Os." 4), that the old Greek word for "to count" meant to count by fives. Many pentads and decalogues are found in the Pentateuch (see Ewald, "History of Israel," E. T. ii. 162).

is regarded as something far higher than ordinary duty to our neighbor. Further, the first and second commandments give absolute injunctions; the third and fourth require something to be done in consequence of them; the third answers to the first, the fourth to the second. All four find an application of positive duty in the fifth.

11. By this arrangement the first table gives us the rules of Piety, and the second the rules of Probity. Our filial duties are our duties towards God; our fraternal duties are those towards our neighbors. And thus, as Philo says, "Both tables are beautiful and advantageous, opening to men wrought and level roads so as to secure the safe and unswerving progress of that soul which is continually desiring what is most excellent."

12. But some may ask whether the almost exclusively *negative* form of the Ten Commandments does not militate against our high estimation of their spirituality? Are not precepts more important than prohibitions? Does not holiness consist in positive conduct more than in mere abstention from wrongdoing?

The answer is, first, that the prohibitions of this code have been understood from the earliest days until now as involving the whole range of moral exhortation. This will appear when we speak of the true mode of interpreting their meaning.

And next, the negative form involves a deep and solemn lesson. Scripture is at one with heathen ethics in recognizing that there is, as our ninth

Article teaches, an infection in our nature, "whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth alway contrary to the spirit." This *φρόνημα σαρκός*, the concupiscence "which of our corrupt nature doth lust against God and the law," * was clearly recognized by the Greek sage when he said that "most men are bad"; and by Aristotle, in his "Nicomachean Ethics." "The tendency of our nature is towards pleasure, wherefore we are more prone," he says, "to license than to self-control." † One of the Rabbis, when asked why the commandments were mostly negative in form, answered: "It is because of the *yetzer-ha-ra*, or evil impulse." The Talmud abounds in references to this evil impulse. Quoting Ps. lxxxi. 9: "There shall no strange god be in thee," Rab Avin asks, "What strange god is there *in* the body of man? Thou must admit that this is the *yetzer-ha-ra*, or evil propensity." ‡ The book was to be laid beside the ark "that it may be there for a witness against thee; for I know thy rebellion and thy stiff neck." § The negative form of the commandments, as Calvin ob-

* Bullinger.

† Arist. "Eth. Nic." ii. 8, § 8. *Οἷον αὐτοὶ πεφύκαμεν μᾶλλον πρὸς τὰς ἡδονάς, διὸ εὐκατάφοροί ἐσμεν μᾶλλον πρὸς ἀκολασίαν ἢ πρὸς κοσμιότητα.* —Deut. xxxi. 27.

‡ Shabbath, f. 105, 2; Berachoth, f. 61, 1. For many Rabbinic allusions, see Hershon, "Genesis according to the Talmud," pp. 195, 196.

§ Deut. xxxi. 22.

serves, "intimates our natural bent and inducement to sin, that it sufficeth not to show us what ought to be done, but we are to be held and bridled by countermands from the practices of ungodliness and unrighteousness."

13. We may also notice the *individual* address of each of the commandments. They do not say "*Ye* shall not," but "*Thou* shalt not." Philo's remarks on this subject are excellent. God, he says, decides by this to teach:

(*a*) "That most excellent lesson to those who read the sacred Scriptures, that each separate individual by himself, when he is an observer of the law and obedient to God, is of equal estimation with a whole nation, or with all the nations upon earth."

(*b*) "That each should feel that each commandment was addressed to him, and not make the multitude a kind of veil and excuse for his obstinacy."

(*c*) That we might see how "the uncreated, everlasting, immortal God cannot endure to overlook even the meanest of human beings, but has thought even such worthy of being banqueted on sacred oracles and laws." *

14. Beside the facts that considerations of symmetry and the true division of the subjects dealt with point to the division of the tables into two pentads, we may notice that:

(i.) In the first table, as thus divided, the phrase "the Lord thy God" occurs in every commandment;

* Philo, "De X Præceptis," § 10.

whereas it is not found in the second, in which "thy neighbor" is four times repeated.

(ii.) To each of the first five a motive is attached, but not to any of the second five.

(iii.) The Jews endeavored to connect each commandment on the first table with each on the second. Thus, the first proclaims the majesty of God, and the sixth the sacredness of a life made in His image. The second forbids idolatry, and the seventh, adultery, with which idolatry was always compared. The third forbids perjury, and the eighth theft, which leads to perjury. The fourth ordains the Sabbath, the violation of which resembles false witness against God as the Creator, and the ninth forbids false witness against men. The tenth forbids the covetous desires which lead to filial irreverence.*

15. It may be further observed that in both tables the first four commandments are closely connected, and the fifth in each case, though differing from the others, furnishes them with a natural and noble close. Because of thy duties to God, honor thy parents; because of thy duties to man, avoid the very thought of evil.

16. Although the original form of the Decalogue as carved on the tables was undoubtedly the shortest as well as the greatest of all moral codes, yet we can

* The last two connections are very fanciful. Still more fanciful are the supposed parallels between the commandments and the fiats of creation in Gen. i., in the Midrash; and between the Ten Commandments and the ten plagues of Egypt (Ps. Clement, "Recogn." iii. 55).

see that the appendices to the commands furnish a series of progressive thoughts. Thus:

1. I am thy God, because I am thy deliverer.

2. I am the true God in this double character—towards friends and towards foes; therefore,

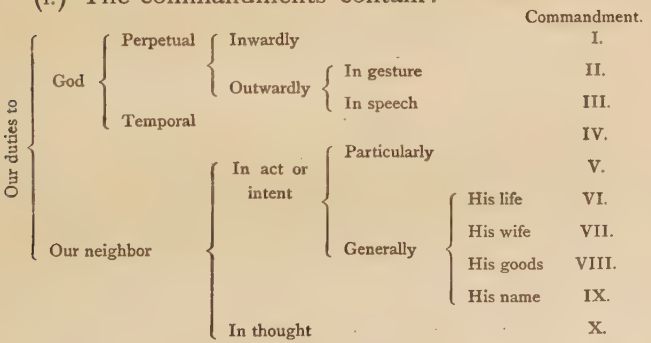
3. My dignity is not to be insulted with impunity.

4. It is I who lead thee to higher tranquillity; therefore *

5. I shall now lead thee into a land of thine own —a blessing which thou wilt only retain by genuine goodness.†

17. In considering the *scope* and *interpretation* of the commandments I shall freely follow and modernize the quaint and thoughtful teaching of Bishop Andrewes. ‡

(i.) The commandments contain:



* "Mechilta to Jethro," 8; Jalkut, i. 299, as quoted by Hamburger.

† Ewald, ii. 163.

‡ Lancelot Andrewes. Minor Works, pp. 63 ff., "Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine," 1630 (Oxford, 1846).

(ii.) Each commandment forbids and commands all things that must be left undone or done; but not the hundredth part of this in the bare words without exposition.

The rules of interpretation are two: (*a*) Extension; (*b*) limitation.

(*a*) Interpretation by extension. The Jews had thirteen rules of interpretation, Christians have six.

RULE 1. Every precept must be taken both affirmatively and negatively. By this rule the Rabbis gathered 248 affirmative precepts, according to the number of the joints of our body; and 365 negative precepts after the days of the year = 613, the whole of the letters in the Ten Commandments in Hebrew.*

RULE 2. Every precept contains all the species that are under it—*e.g.*, we must honor our parents, and therefore much more must we honor God.

RULE 3. Every precept is spiritual (Rom. vii. 14; John iv. 23).†

* It is worth while to add the wise and curious comments of the Talmud on this multiplication of precepts, which was also promoted by the fantastic device of *Gematria* (or isopsephism), in which the numerical value of the Hebrew letters for Torah (law) = 613 (as well as "I am and thou shalt have no other" = 613). But, say the Rabbis (Maccoth, f. 23, 2), David reduced these 613 to 11 (Ps. xv. 1–5); Isaiah to 6 (Is. xxxvii. 15), Micah to 3 (Mic. vi. 8); Isaiah again to 2 (Is. lvi. 1), Amos to 1 (Amos v. 4), and Habakkuk to 1 (Hab. ii. 4).

† In the weighty words of Hooker ("Disc. on Justification," § 7), "If our hands did never offer violence to our brethren, a bloody thought doth prove us murderers before him; if we had never opened our mouths to utter any scandalous, offensive, or hurtful words, the cry of our secret cogitations is heard in the ears of God."

RULE 4. All the means to any offence are forbidden, and to the things commanded are commanded.

RULE 5. All the signs of obedience and of disobedience are commanded and forbidden as well as the things themselves (Is. iii. 16; haughtiness and softness, 1 Tim. ii. 9; costly array, Zeph. i. 8, etc.).

RULE 6. We must not be accessories to any transgression either by command (Is. x. 1; Dan. iii. 4, etc.); permission (Lev. xx. 4; 1 Sam. iii. 13, etc.); revocation (Job ii. 9; 1 Kings xxi. 25); counsel (Ps. i. 1; Gen. xlix. 6, etc.); approbation (Rom. i. 32, etc.); or defence (Prov. xxiv. 24; Is. v. 20).

(*b*) Interpretation by limitations.

The scope of each commandment must be treated by common sense and the other teaching of Scripture. Thus the third does not forbid oaths in courts of justice; and the sixth does not forbid capital punishment.

18. The commandments then may be summed up as expressing the threefold duty of holiness towards God; self-control as regards ourselves; justice towards our neighbors. Had they been faithfully observed they would have exempted Israel as they exempt all mankind from the burdensome and unspiritual nullities of ritual. Levitism seems to have only become necessary because of their stiff necks and hard hearts, and it consisted in great measure of statutes which were not good, and judgments whereby they could not live; whereas instead of all such

minutiæ they might have enjoyed "the sacred fire of justice, of moral discipline, of religious puritanism."

The corruption of these threefold relations is the transgression of the law. It is a violation of our subjection towards God when we listen to the whisper, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil;" of our duty to ourselves when we make pleasure the guide of our actions, to say *quod libet licet;* of our duty to our neighbors when we live only for our own ends.

19. As regards the manner of our obedience, it must be with all our power. We must obey not with one part of our being, the body only or the mind only, but with all our heart, and all our mind, and all our soul, and all our strength; we must obey without reservation, not lying to the Holy Ghost like Ananias and Sapphira by keeping back part of the price, not keeping for ourselves the one darling, the one bosom, the one besetting sin; we must obey continually, not on Sundays only, but on all days and every day; not in old age only, but in childhood and youth, and manhood too.*

20. And as regards the result, we must either obey or suffer, and that alike in things temporal and things eternal. And since all of the commandments are rendered sacred by the primary and eternal laws of duty and obedience, we see that whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he has become guilty of all.† And the obligation of them is eternal:—"Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from

* Ezek. xx. 24. † James ii. 10.

the law till all be fulfilled." The mass of Levitical laws at best were made up of burdensome and minute ceremonies, but they were only a shadow of good things to come, of which the substance was Christ. Leviticus consisted of "weak and beggarly elements,"* imperfect, transient, powerless to take away sin, and now dismantled because of its weakness and unprofitableness, carnal ordinances imposed only till a time of reformation.† But of the eternal moral law Christ said: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets," the prophets being themselves full of utter disparagement of all that was merely ceremonial. "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of Heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven." ‡

21. Such, then, is the great, the inexpressible importance of the Ten Words of God.

They inculcate the two primary and exclusive ends of life—worship and service; piety and equity; the love of God and the love of man.§ The facts that they are addressed to each separate soul, and end

* Gal. iv. 9.

† Heb. vi. 11–13; vii. 18, 19; ix. 9, 10; x. 1–4.

‡ Matt. v. 17–19. St. Augustine explains the phrase *πληρῶσαι*, "Non ut adderentur legi quæ deerant, sed ut fierent quæ scripta erant."—c. Faust, xvii. 6.

§ *Πολυσχιδὲς μὲν τῆς θείας διδασκαλίας τὸ σχῆμα, συναιρεῖται δὲ ὡς ἐν κεφαλαίῳ εἰς τε μάθησιν ἐντολῶν καὶ φυλακήν, εἰς τε τὴν θείαν γνῶσιν καὶ προσκύνησιν.*—Just. Mart. "Expos. Fidei."

with forbidding an evil desire, show that they repudiate the spirit of sacerdotalism and of caste, that they were addressed to a nation in which all were priests to God, and that they were the laws not of self-interest or of force, but of a divine equality for Jeshurun whom God had chosen.* They were, as even Strauss admits, a great appeal to and awakenment of the conscience of mankind.†

"The rest of the Scripture is but a commentary upon them; either exhorting us to obedience by arguments; or alluring us to it by promises; or frightening us from transgressing by threatenings; or exciting us to the one, and restraining us from the other, by examples recorded in the historical part of it":‡—or, we may add, by showing us that we have sinned, we have all sinned, but that with God in Christ there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And thus "Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth."

> "God is not dumb, that He should speak no more;
> If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness
> And find'st not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor;
> There towers the mountain of the Voice no less,
> Which whoso seeks shall find; but he who bends,
> Intent on manna still and mortal ends,
> Sees it not, neither hears its thundered lore." §

* Jeshurun means *uprightness*, Grätz, i. 43.

† Strauss, "Der alte und der neue Glaube," 234.

‡ Bp. Ezekiel Hopkins (Bishop of Exeter and Derry, 4 vols., 1819): vol. i. "An Exposition upon the Commandments," pp. 264–600. See, too, a weighty passage in Barrow, "Works," vi. 474 ff.

§ J. R. Lowell.

THE TEN WORDS.

"And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always."—DEUT. vi. 24.

"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God . . . to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes."—DEUT. x. 12, 13.

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."—MIC. vi. 8.

"I have seen an end of all perfection; but Thy commandment is exceeding broad."—PS. cxix. 96.

"Thou camest down also upon Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgment and true laws, good statutes and commandments."—NEH. ix. 13.

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; and He shall walk in the way for those; the wayfaring men, yea, fools, shall not err therein" (marg.).—IS. xxxv. 8.

"Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."—IS. xxx. 21.

"And unto man He saith, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."—JOB xxviii. 28.

"This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard; fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."—ECCLES. xii. 13.

"Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God."—1 COR. vii. 19.

"And hereby know we that we know Him, if we keep His commandments."—1 JOHN ii. 3.

"So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."—ROM. vii. 12.

"But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."—MATT. xix. 17.

"God spake all these words. Ten words. He added no more. Here we may note (1) The perfection of this law, that no more was needful to be added; (2) The excellency of it, being so short and yet so perfect."—LEIGHTON.

"And God spake all these words."

EXOD. XX. 1.

WE are told in many voices—speaking sometimes in tones of scorn, sometimes of sorrow, sometimes of exaltation—that Christianity is dead; that science has shattered its faith in the supernatural; that criticism has sapped the bases of its narratives; that comparative mythology has explained the form of its development; that the philosophy of history has accounted for its conquests. Nor is it only some solitary thinker here and there who tells us this; but these assertions are reverberated in hundreds of echoes, and the ignorances of fancied wisdom are babbled second-hand by innumerable tongues. He who wrote the *Novum Organum* entreated God that "from the unlocking of the gates of sense, and the kindling of a greater natural light, nothing of incredulity or of intellectual right might arise in our minds towards divine mysteries;" and he who wrote the *Historia Plantarum* proposed to himself nothing loftier than the *divinæ gloriæ illustratio.** He who discovered the law of gravitation laid it down as his belief and axiom that *Deus omnia regit, non ut anima mundi, sed ut universus Dominus.*† One who of modern times was

* To throw light on the glory of God.

† God rules all things, not as a soul of the world, but as its universal Lord.

worthiest to follow them truly says of these, that "they fought under the banner of Christ, and cast the spoils of their victory at the feet of their God." But now all is changed, and every half-taught student, every crude catcher-up of current literature, can demolish with one flash of his intellect, or set aside with one wave of his hand, the truths which up to yesterday a Faraday and a Whewell preached. Now if we, as clergy of the Church of England, share in this scepticism, I say unhesitatingly that it is our duty at all costs to proclaim our altered view, and to abandon our position. If, indeed, we believe that this visible universe—the sea and the sky, and the green trees, and the hearts and faces of men and women are but the passing phantasmagoria of dead atoms combined by impersonal laws; if beyond this world of fleeting and illusory phenomena there be no God for us to adore, no Christ to love, no Heaven to hope for, no Hell to fear; if the soul of man be but a confused mirror of passing images, and "all reality be converted into a marvellous dream without a life to dream of, and without a mind to dream," then you will never persuade the great mass of mankind that moral obligation is not the same dreary delusion as all things else. But however this may be, and even if materialism succeeds in persuading us that the things which we call virtue, and honor, and self-sacrifice, and faith, are not, as we had imagined, conceptions breathed into the soul of man by the inspiration of God, but fancies due to the molecular arrangement

of the substance of the brain, even then I hope that, with us at least, the passive instinct of virtue and of honor will be too strong for such philosophy, and that on the day when we cease to believe we shall also cease to teach. But, strange as it may seem, after all these clever articles, all these contemptuous assurances, all these arrow-flights of brilliant epigrams, we are not at all dismayed, though we are told that our faith in Christ is a designing hypocrisy, and our acceptance of the supernatural an imbecile superstition. And why? Because the light we see needs no other evidence than its own quiet shining in the darkness; because, however little the deaf may hear them, the still small voices speak to us every moment in the utterance of God; because the great currents of our being which set towards eternity sweep away these misgivings as light and hollow things are swept away by some rolling tide. The sceptic and the scorner may assault our understanding, but they cannot storm the citadel of our reason. They may perplex the intellect; the spirit they cannot darken. And however much they may combine audacity with arrogance, yet the humblest Christian whose faith is founded on a living experience, and who sees those spiritual things which can alone be spiritually discerned, breaks with one of his fingers through the brain-spun meshes of their impotent negations. Prove to him that by God we ought to mean nothing but the vortices of atoms or the streams of tendency; prove to him that he was not made by God in the image of God, but was

evolved from a film of protoplasm, which had an inherent potency to endow itself with life—and, at the end of your triumphant demonstration, he will but kneel down before Him who made us, and not we ourselves; and with bowed head, and heart kindled into yet more glowing adoration by the astonishment of indignant love, will pray, if possible, with yet deeper conviction than before, "Our Father which art in Heaven."

2. And because there are millions of such Christians still, I for one can only smile when we are so confidently assured that Christ is an anachronism. There have been sceptics before now. Long before Christianity had acquired one tithe of that majestic ascendancy which, except through our apostasy, it can never lose, there was a Celsus with his impassioned polemic; and a Porphyry with his haughty culture; and a Lucian with his withering sneer. Yet Christianity grew. There is not more genius, more energy, more freedom from bias now than there was in the fifteenth century, yet Christianity proved stronger than the doubters of the Renaissance. There is not more progressive science or so much brilliant wit in this century as in the eighteenth, yet Christianity has survived the Encyclopædists and Voltaire. The fifteenth century was followed by the Reformation; the eighteenth by the revival of religious life. Let not our hearts be troubled. The Church of Christ was not built on the shifting sand, but founded deep in the living rock. Century after century the rain has

descended and the floods risen, and the winds blown and beaten upon it. Century after century the tide of assaulting criticism has ebbed to rush up again with fiercer surges and more apparently resistless force. But, look again. The rock is there, unshaken still. It is but the blustering waves which have been shattered into spray, and dashed into a briny mist upon the winds.

3. I do not deny that we are passing through a crisis which may correct our errors, and modify the accidents of our belief. But though we cannot fear for the Christian verities themselves, there is, I think, an immense peril that many will lose all faith in their religion, and that some will be content to wear, as a hollow mask, the profession of a religion which they have ceased to hold. And this I call an immense peril, because, if there be one thing which history has taught more clearly than another, it is that a nation cannot lose its religion without losing also its virtue and its integrity; and the fate of nation after nation, in epoch after epoch, has shown that ages of mental disbelief are ages also of moral iniquity. But if so, how then are we to face the growing scepticism? By anathema and denunciation? Those, my brethren, are not the weapons of a Church which proclaims the sacredness of tolerance, and glories in the liberty of prophesying. By social persecutions and legal penalties? Those we believe to be as immoral as they are happily impossible. Learning, argument, moderation, candor? Yes; these, no doubt, may do some-

thing, though they cannot and will not convince those in whom the very premises they start from are wholly different from our own. No argument of the believer will convert the sceptic; no assertion of the sceptic shakes the believer; the two speak to each other in different languages, neither of which can the other understand. But there is one thing which we can both do; one common ground on which we both can meet: it is to aim more and more at noble examples and holy lives, in perfect kindliness with perfect courtesy. Let us provoke one another, not to useless and angry controversies, but to good works which God hath ordained that we should walk in them. After all, the one argument for Christianity which of old neither pagan nor philosopher could overthrow was this—*Nos soli innocentes sumus.** Sure I am that if any walk humbly and steadfastly in the path of a holy life, him will God lead—I say not into the acceptance of this or that dogma—but undoubtedly into the temple of a saving faith. Faith is not only a child of the reason, or of the intellect: a moral element also must preside at her birth. He that doeth the will shall know of the doctrine. Let thy heart be pure, if without belief thou canst make it pure; and, sooner or later, thou shalt see the face of God. Let thine eye be single, if without God thou canst make it single, and, sooner or later, thy whole body shall be full of light. "He," says the son of Sirach, "he that keepeth the law of the Lord, getteth the

* "We alone live blameless lives."—Tert. "Apol." 45.

understanding thereof." "He," said One greater than the son of Sirach, "he that keepeth My commandments, he it is that loveth Me." Let us all then —whatever be our creed or no creed—vie at least with one another in trying to live lives simple and humble and full of love; and if indeed any can live such lives without faith in immortality or God or Christ, most gladly will we hold out to them the hands of loving fellowship; most firmly will we still believe that to them also at the end, no less than to us, will God's own hand fling open the gates of everlasting life.

4. It is not therefore without significance that week by week we stand at the holy table in our churches, and read the Ten Commandments, and usher them in with the mighty overture, "God spake these words and said." The greatest of modern thinkers declared that two things filled his whole soul with the sense of their majesty—the starry heavens above and the moral law within; and when, as he meditated, all reality seemed to crumble into dust and ashes at his feet, and life to be no better than the shadow of a dream, the same great thinker found in the moral law his one solid standpoint of conviction and certitude. Yes, the sense of duty which the law creates, if a man use it lawfully, is to our very beings like the granite bases of the world. If the sceptic can find nothing else to build on, let him build on this, as on one of those indestructible foundations which cannot be shaken and shall remain. For although, as the

Greek poet sang, "the laws themselves are neither of to-day nor yesterday, but live forever since immemorial time," no truer or briefer summary can be given than has been given in this Decalogue of 3000 years ago. Those Ten Commandments, those Ten Words as the Jews called them, were to them the very utterance of the Eternal. They hold in their grand imagination that the souls of all Jews even yet unborn were summoned to Sinai in their "numbers numberless" to hear that code; so that in the East, to this day, if a Jew would indignantly deny the imputation of a wrong, he exclaims: "My soul too has been on Sinai!" And not to Jews only, but to all mankind, there is this proof that the Ten Words were indeed the oracles of God, that, if they be written upon the heart, engraved there durably as with pen of iron on tablets of rock—they are an "It is written," sufficient for our moral guidance—they are a great *Non licet* strong enough to quell the fiercest passions. For the laws of the natural universe may mislead us. One tells us that they are just and beneficent; another that they are deadly and remorseless; but of these moral laws we know that they are the will of God. No man has seen His face at any time. He seems far away in the infinite Heaven; clouds and darkness are round about Him: yes, but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne!

5. And is that law abrogated now, or shorn of its significance? Nay, brethren, it remains for the Gen-

tile no less than for the Jew, for the nineteenth century after Christ no less than for the fifteenth before Him—the immutable expression of God's will. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; generations perish and empires pass away; but not one jot or tittle—not one small letter or projecting horn of a letter—in that inviolable law. I know, of course, that we are accused of ignorance or superstition for thus thinking of those Ten Commandments. I know that a leading man of science has not scrupled to charge the clergy of England with hypocrisy for standing Sunday by Sunday at the altar with the preface, "God spake these words and said." My brethren, as one of those 20,000 clergy of England, I avow this day before you all, that unless it be hypocrisy to use the language of most absolute conviction; unless it be superstition to accept that to which all experience has set its seal; unless it be imbecility to interpret the lessons of human history as the clear expression of the divine intuition—then in the very truest and deepest sense of which those words are capable (which is not the sense of a voice in the air, but the sense of something speaking from without to man's heart and conscience—in language articulate as that of manhood, and loud as the voices of the mountains and the sea), I believe and will say unto the last, God *did* speak those words and say. Some, it may be, when they hear those awful words, think only of the imagery of Exodus—the mountain that burned with fire, the rolling darkness, the thundering trumpet-peals, the myriads of

glittering faces, the "rush of congregated wings"; but if to any of you this has become incredible, as to thousands it has become incredible, except as the language of allegory and imagination, think not that you have lost more than that which is, in any case, but an insignificant fraction of our meaning, when we tell you that "God spake these words and said." Critics have troubled themselves to count the number of times that Moses is said to have ascended and descended the mountain; they have paraded before us the real or supposed discrepancies of the narrative; they have almost ridiculed its rude anthropomorphism; they have pointed out the variations between one form and another of the code; they have reduced the phenomena of Sinai to accidental storms in which God's angels were but the winds and His ministers the flames of fire. And all this has its own small place, and is very right in its own small way; but let them not think that they have done something very fine and serviceable to humanity in showing that these Ten Commandments cannot be the very *vocables* of God. The vocables, my brethren, no; but the word of God, yes; the will of God, yes; the law of God, yes! Think not that the divine rule which is to regulate the life of man depends on the limits of a Semitic metaphor, or that we are driven to stake the reasonableness of our faith on our ability to decide between rival commentators on the antiquity of an inflection or the delicacies of a style. When you have told us all you can imagine or dis-

cover about these, and decided that all counter-arguments are valueless, what then? Are we to shrink back defeated, the dupes of ignorance or the votaries of hypocrisy? Or rather, are we to say, Believe, or not, in this Sinaitic splendor and these thunder-shaken crags; but whether the desert trembled and Sinai blazed or not, the great law of God as expressed in those Ten Commandments has to thee and me a sanction indefinitely more transcendent, an origin indisputably more divine. That sanction is not derived from the mere historic record of the belief that more than thirty centuries ago a nation of slaves and fugitives heard in the air a great Voice which has been heard no more. We do believe that these Ten Words, "Thou shalt have none other God, thou shalt not make to thyself a graven image, nor take God's name in vain, nor break His sabbaths, nor dishonor thy parents, nor kill, nor commit adultery, nor cheat, nor bear false witness, nor covet,"—we do believe that by some mighty revelation, which came to them as intensely as from the infolding flame, those commandments were stamped at Sinai upon the heart of Israel;* but if we thus believe that "God spake those words and said," it is mainly because we also believe (aye, and would to God that we could put that utter-

* Unless some stupendous and supernatural impression had been made upon the Israelites at Sinai, it would be impossible to account for the awe and passion with which in age after age the Hebrew prophets and poets spoke of the scenes which there took place. Let the reader study the following splendid passages: Deut. xxxiii. 2; Judg. v. 4, 5; Ps. lxviii. 7, 8; Hab. iii. 2–19.

ance in the thunder's mouth!) that here and now, and in England and in this church, to every heart, whether innocent or guilty, to every conscience, whether slumbering or awakened, to every intellect, whether humble or defiant, God *speaks* these words and *says*. Neither did Israel see, nor see we now, any manner of similitude, and Sinai rears its granite precipices into the unclouded blue. But the Voice remains, and not once only or twice in the world's history, among Pagans as among Jews, among Sceptics as among Christians, have the lightnings confirmed it; aye, and shall do, we believe, again. God, as the Italian proverb says, does not pay on Saturdays. He is very patient, and men may long deny His existence or blaspheme His name. But more than in the mighty strong wind which rent the mountains, and more than in fire, and more than in earthquake, is God in that still small voice which is sounding yet. If you would hear it, you must listen indeed with meek heart and due reverence, and, flinging aside that robe of indifference which you have tied so close with the knotted girdle of your pride, must go forth with bowed head and covered brow; but if you will do this, then to you in this church, amid what you believe to be the wane of creeds, will God speak face to face as He spake to Moses on Sinai, as He spake to Elijah in Horeb's cave. Oh, it is not in Exodus alone, or in Deuteronomy alone, but in all Nature that we hear His voice.

Daily with souls that cringe and plot
We Sinais climb and know it not;
Over our manhood bend the skies;
Against our fallen and traitor lives
The great winds utter prophecies;
With our faint hearts the mountain strives.

In the glow of consolation which steals over the mourner's breast, in the glare of conviction which lights up the theatre of the awakened conscience, we have read God's words. In scene after scene of history, in discovery after discovery of science, in experience after experience of life, have we heard them proclaiming in thunder across the centuries the eternal distinctions of right and wrong. And for the substantial truth of those Jewish records, for their truth so far as England, or here, or now, or you, or I are concerned, herein lie the proofs that this prelude to the Ten Commandments is not the blasphemous invention of a designing superstition, but that in the whole awfulness of meaning of which the words are capable, God spake those words and said.*

6. And though by repetition familiar words are evacuated of half their meaning, yet I know but few

* As regards the mere *material* interpretation of the words, even the wiser Rabbis felt it to be unimportant. From Ex. xx. 1, some argued that the words were spoken to all the people; from Deut. v. 5, others maintained that they were addressed to Moses alone. Some again maintained that the sole words spoken by God were the first commandment. High Jewish authorities did not hesitate to attribute to simple anthropomorphism the description of the descent of Jehovah on Mount Sinai. See the Talmudic authorities quoted in Hamburger, "Real. Enc. für Bibel und Talmud," s.v. *Zehngebote.*

words which could convey a fact more awful than this. Let any man put himself if he will, or if he think that he must, in the position not of a Christian, but of a Pagan; let him change what you call Hellenism for what he is pleased to call Hebraism; let him obliterate every thought of Sinai or of Israel, or of that momentous history which Sinai and Israel ushered in; by doing so he may find it as terribly difficult as the heathen did to conform his life to the moral law, and may come at last, as they did, and as some in modern days have done, to abuse the pride of intellect to palliate the excesses of passion, and make of a pseudo-philosophy a "procuress to the lords of hell." And if indeed he do not stop short of this; if, as some have done, he gets to treat the moral sense as a mere odious embarrassment developed by Christianity for the torture of mankind; if, as some have done, he lets his Hellenic fancies breathe, like a vapor from a charnel-house, a subtle taint of Hellenic guilt—then he hath neither part nor lot in this matter. Against such, as against those who would pollute the very river of the water of life—by all that is great in the hope of nations, by all that is holy in the life of man, by all that is awful in the law of God—against such, not as priests but as patriots, not as Churchmen but as citizens, our toleration ceases and our just anger burns. But even in this last worst degeneracy—though then the imagination is darkened, though then the man has become past feeling, though then thinking himself wise he has become a

fool—even then, though it be but in the awful rush before the bursting of the hurricane, God speaks these words and says. Believe or disbelieve, obey or disobey, but you cannot always continue deaf to these laws of God. They are eternal, irresistible, inexorable. Man cannot shake off their infinite insistence. Intellect has sometimes tried to refute their cogency, and intellect has perished in infamy and darkness. Ambition has struggled to limit their applicability, and ambition has been crushed to atoms by their operation. Genius has exalted itself to a fancied superiority to their restrictions, and genius has sunk to be an object of contemptuous pity to the meanest of mankind. If you lose all else, O young man that rejoicest in thy youth, here at least is a basis of obedience on which the whole superstructure of religion may be built once more. Be faithful to these duties, and your conscience will soon speak to you in voices more eloquent than that of Moses, and louder than those of Sinai, for you will feel that "the eternal law of righteousness has laid its sovereign hand upon you, and that from it you can never be released till God says 'You are free.'"

Confidently I appeal to you and ask, Have you not, at some time in your lives, heard the voice of God utter to you distinctly these commandments of the moral law? Is there one here who has ever disobeyed that voice and prospered? Is there one here who has ever listened to it and failed? Is there one burning shame, one crushing misery, one damned

spot, in the life of any one of you which you can trace to any source but to disobedience of it? If there be one here who at this moment has in his heart some overwhelming dread, is it not because he has in some particular broken God's law? If there be one here who feels at this moment, in the depths of his soul, a peace which the world can neither give nor take away, is it not solely because by the aid of God's Holy Spirit he has striven to obey it? Yes; its infinite importance is that it is as old, not as Sinai, but as humanity, and represents the will of God to all His children in the great family of man; so that if in this life we be passing from mystery to mystery, it is our surest proof that we are passing also from God to God. What matters it that we know not either whence we came, or what we are, if "He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

7. And thus it is, lastly, that if we be faithful, the law may lead us to the Gospel. For his must indeed be a shallow soul who thinks it an easy thing to keep the commandments. When we observe that the summary of the first table is that life is worship, and of the second that life is service; when we notice that the first table forbids sin against God, first in thought, then in word, then in deed; while the second, proceeding in a reverse order, forbids sins against our neighbor, first in deed, then in word, and then in thought—so that, unlike every other code that the

world has ever known, the commandments begin and end with the utter prohibition of evil thoughts—which of us is not conscious that we have utterly broken God's law in this, that out of the heart proceed evil thoughts? And when we go from Moses to Jesus, from Sinai to Galilee, will Christ abolish the law? Will He relax its stringency? Will He teach us that we may keep both our sin and our Saviour, and that there is no distinction between a state of sin and a state of grace? Nay, more stringently than to them of old times come the Ten Commandments now. Murder is extended to a furious thought; adultery to a lascivious look. At first it might seem as if our last hope were extinguished; as if now our alienation from God must be permanent, since "admitted into a holier sanctuary, we are but guilty of a deadlier sacrilege." And when this has indeed been brought home to us, when the law, which is the will of God, has also become the mirror of ourselves, and we see the unfathomable gulf which yawns between a God of infinite holiness and a heart of desperate corruption, then cometh the midnight. But after that midnight, to the faithful soul there shall be light. With the personal conviction that the law worketh wrath, comes also the personal experience that Christ hath delivered us from its curse. In Him comes the sole antidote to guilt, the sole solution to the enigma of despair. True, He deepened the obligation of the law, but for our sake He also fulfilled it. We are guilty, and He offers us a free forgiveness; we are

weary, and He bids us come to Him for rest; we are helpless, and He sends the Strengthener "to turn our rout into resistance, and resistance into victory." And thus by love, and hope, and gratitude, and help He gives us a new impulse, a new inspiration—and this is Christianity; and this Christianity has redeemed, has ennobled, has regenerated the world. To them who receive it in the heart, to them fear is abolished, and

> Love is an unerring light,
> And joy its own security.

The "Thou must" of Sinai becomes the "I ought," "I will," "I can," "I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me." And then for us the law has done its work. It has revealed to us the will of God; it has revealed to us the apostasy of man; it has driven us to know and to embrace the deliverance of Christ. "Ye are not come unto a mount that might be touched and that burned with fire, and unto blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; . . . but ye are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, . . . and to Jesus the Mediator of a New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

8. And is it of this that the critic with his monosyllables, and the man of science with his inch-deep discoveries and his ocean-wide conjectures, and the

materialist with his inability to believe in anything which he cannot grasp with both hands—is it of this that they would rob our souls? They leave us to sin without a Saviour; to guilt without a Mediator; to the deadly wounds of humanity without a balm in Gilead, and with no physician there? Yes; they would leave the awakened sinner a prey to remorse, and agony, and haunted memories; and they would take us to the cell of the lunatic, and the grave of the suicide, and harden us with necessity, or support us with statistics. Nevertheless, the testimony of God remaineth sure. Fragmentarily and multifariously He spake of old to the fathers by the prophets; but, in these last days—not fragmentarily, but in one final revelation, not multifariously, but by one divine eternal voice—hath He spoken unto us by His Son. Τετέλεσται, "It is finished." Never can the race of man, never can the soul of man, be nearer to God than Christ hath brought them: nor, since then, hath there been, nor hath there needed to be, one further ray of moral light, one brighter gleam of spiritual illumination. The last voice from Heaven hath spoken until the trumpet sounds. Be deaf to it, and you will indeed hear it no longer; not a whisper of it shall stir the air; not a murmur of it echo in the ear: but you will hear no other. Jesus, if you will, may become to you but a peasant-prophet who died in Palestine; God, if you will, may become to you dead matter and formless law; yet for all that, the truth remains. Whether in the white robe of His forgive-

ness, or in the filthy rags of our own righteousness, we must all stand before the judgment-seat of God; and of the will of that God, even if we get no further than this initial lesson, thus much at least we all may know, that "GOD SPAKE THESE WORDS AND SAID."

THE LAW OUR TUTOR.

"Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil."—MATT. v. 17.

"Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth."—ROM. x. 4.

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, save through faith in Jesus Christ."—GAL. ii. 16.

"Follow . . . the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord."—HEB. xii. 14.

"But if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments."—MATT. xix. 17.

"If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments."—JOHN xiv. 15.

"We have in the Creed the object of faith; in the Law the exercise of trust and love, for love is the fulfilling of the Law; and 'If ye love Me, keep My commandments,' saith our Saviour."—ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON, "Works," iv. 108.

"If there be a truth which needs to be preached in a time when our Christianity has become too often a theological opinion, or a ritual for the fancy, it is that the Gospel is a law in the noblest sense; a law that rebukes the sins of the household, the Church, the social life, and demands of us a real righteousness; a law as rigid as the tables of stone, yet large as the mind of Christ."—WASHBURN, "The Social Law of God."

"If we separate Christ's redemption from the old commandment, there is immense danger of our looking upon it as a redemption from the God of righteousness, not a redemption by Him from the power of sin."—MAURICE, "The Ten Commandments," p. 15.

Wherefore the Law was our Schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.*

GAL. iii. 24.

I SPOKE to you last Sunday of the moral law; of that ideal of virtue respecting which even the heathen moralist said that it was the supreme of manliness, and that not the morning or the evening star was so fair. A life lived in purity and honor is the loftiest glory possible to any human being; and, unlike the delusive and often ruinous ambition of worldly success, it is as open to the lowliest of us as to the most richly endowed. Every moral obedience —virtue, that is, under every form—and every sinful indulgence—that is, every form of vice—has two interchanging aspects. Virtue has an aspect at first stern and, as it may appear to the soft and loose mind, even menacing; but to those who follow her

* ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν. R. V. "So that the law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." "The tempting explanation, 'one *to conduct us to the school* of Christ,'" says Bishop Lightfoot, "ought probably to be abandoned. Even if this sense did not require πρὸς Χριστὸν for εἰς Χριστόν, the context is unfavorable to it. There is no reference here to our Lord as a teacher. Christ represents the freedom of mature age, for which the restraints of childhood are a preparation" (comp. Eph. iv. 13).—"Galat." p. 145. This view does not, however, affect the argument of the sermon.

she at once reveals her heavenly beauty. "Stern lawgiver!" says our poet,

> "Yet thou dost wear
> The godhead's most benignant grace;
> Nor know we anything so fair
> As is the smile upon thy face:
> Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
> And fragrance in thy footing treads;
> Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
> And the most ancient heavens through thee are fresh and strong."

On the other hand, Vice, at first, has an enchanting song and a bewitching loveliness; but when men have listened to her, she shrivels into loathliness, and appears only in her revolting lair, amid husks and feeding swine, or seated amid the fragments of shipwreck on the beaches of bone-strewn isles.*

2. Now let me show you these two aspects of the moral law as they are represented in the Ten Commandments; and let me then show you the deep meaning which lies in this text, of which perhaps you have never mastered the real significance, or of which for you the real significance may have been worn away by careless familiarity.

3. And first let us see what the words of the text mean.

* See Dante, "Purgatorio," xix. 7–33, where "a saintly lady" (Wisdom, Prov. viii. 1) compels the Siren to appear in her own proper loathliness:

> "L' altra prendeva, e dinanzi l' apria,
> Fendendo i drappi; e mostravami 'l ventre:
> Quel mi svegliò col puzzo che n' uscia."

The law hath been our "schoolmaster" to bring us unto Christ. If you will turn to the Revised Version you will see that for "schoolmaster" is substituted the word "tutor." But neither schoolmaster nor tutor expresses the meaning of the original Greek word of St. Paul, *παιδαγωγός*, and we have no English word which does. The *παιδαγωγός* was the slave who in Athens led boys to school; and slave though he was, he was generally an experienced and honored slave, and to him were entrusted the care, discipline, and moral guardianship of the boys of the family.* Now the uses of the moral law are analogous to this. Our life is but the childhood of our eternity, the school-days preparatory for the immortal years beyond; and to the law—as a ruler, stern yet benefi-

* The word is well illustrated by Plato ("Lysis," c. 12). Socrates asks the boy:

"Do they allow you to govern yourself, or do they not even permit you this?"—"How can they?" he said.

"Who, then, rules over you?"—"The pedagogue," said he.

"What, though he is a slave?"—"What, then?" he said; "he is our own slave."

"Strange," said I, "that you who are free should be ruled by a slave; and in what actions, tell me, does this slave rule over you?"—"Why, of course he leads me to the teachers," said he.

"The *paidagogos*," says Lightfoot, "had the whole early direction of the child, so that *paidagogia* became equivalent to 'moral training.'" Libanius has the same notion: "We shall first train (*παιδαγωγήσομεν*) his deliberate choice by law, so that rising out of the loss inflicted by the law they may be compelled to sober-mindedness," *Oratt.* iv. 437. St. Paul may have borrowed the word from the Rabbis, as well as from the Greek, for they had transliterated it into Hebrew (Schöttgen, i. 741). The word conveys notions of fidelity ("Custos incorruptissimus," Hor. "Sat." i. 6, 81) and strictness.

cent—is entrusted the discipline of our souls until we have been built up into Christ. When that is done, the end of life is attained. Then the "Thou shalt" of law has melted into the rapturous alacrity and purpose of disciplined character and perfect love.

4. Now, as the slave who led boys to school in ancient Greece had to be stern and watchful for the sake of the boys themselves, so too is God's law, which comes to us, as we have seen already, with the mighty sanction that it is the express word and will of God.

What are the Ten Commandments? And what do they mean? Perhaps you think that you know all about them. Alas! it is only too possible for a man conceitedly to imagine, as the young ruler did, that he has sounded them to their depths, and even to say with offended self-complacence, "All these have I kept from my youth," and yet in reality to be absolutely and childishly ignorant of their structure, of their significance, and of every essential truth which they are meant to teach us.

5. Let us then consider their structure.

They occur in the Books of Moses in two different forms; and the form from the Book of Exodus, with which we are so familiar, is probably one of the later and more expanded editions. As engraved by Moses on the two tables of stone, each law probably occupied but a single line.

On the first table:

Thou shalt have none other gods but Me.

Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image.
Thou shalt not take My name in vain.
Thou shalt keep My sabbaths.
Honor thy father and thy mother.

And on the second table:

Thou shalt do no murder.
Thou shalt not commit adultery.
Thou shalt not steal.
Thou shalt not slander.
Thou shalt not covet.

6. Now, as they thus stand, apart from all further explanation, they would no doubt be trebly defective as a code of morals. Trebly defective: (i.) first, because they are mostly prohibitions, "Thou shalt not"; and would therefore, taken alone, involve only a negative virtue; whereas virtue demands not only passivity but energy, not only abstinence but action. (ii.) They would be defective, secondly, because they deal mainly with outward acts alone, and it is quite possible to be correct in outward acts and yet for the heart to be abominably wicked, like a whitened sepulchre, glistening without, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. (iii.) They would be defective, thirdly, because, taken alone, they are not sufficiently comprehensive, and do not, for instance, formally forbid such sins as drunkenness or gambling. It was such defectiveness which made the young ruler rather despise them as too elementary for him, fancying that he had kept them all from his

youth up, while yet he was only too sadly conscious that he had not got eternal life. It is this purely external view of them which makes many a man regard himself as a highly moral, respectable, worthy, and even religious personage, when in reality he is utterly self-deceived and needs the revealing flash of God's eternity to show him that in his worthlessness he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

7. But when once we begin to understand the Ten Commandments rightly, we shall be very far from thinking them too easy of fulfilment. Let us come to Christ and hear Him explain their meaning. Let us arise and take our seat among those poor multitudes, and listen with them to His Sermon on the Mount. Far different, indeed, is that scene from the awfulness of Sinai, with the menace of its burning and tempest-smitten crags. There are no shrouded Presences, no thundering clouds, no palpable and enkindled fire, no scorching wilderness, no gathering darkness around the trembling hill. No, but in the calm and happy dawn there is the Son of Man, a sweet human Presence, His lips full of grace, seated on the vernal grass, with the scarlet anemones and the golden amaryllis bursting into flower about His feet, over that sweet lake—

> "Clear silver water in a cup of gold,
> Under the sunlit steeps of Gadara,—
> The waves He loved, the waves that kissed His feet
> So many blessed days."

And in that fair and smiling scene a voice that did not strive or cry is flowing out most gently in words of peace. And what says He of those Ten Commandments? "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill. But I say unto you that every one who is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment;" "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you that whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Now, from these and other teachings of our Lord, we begin to see that the Ten Commandments were never meant to be taken only in the letter. We see that every one of them was meant to be positive as well as negative. In every "Thou shalt not" was included the opposite "Thou shalt." We see, again, that in each command was an all-inclusive comprehensiveness, intended to cover all cognate duties: so that, for instance, the seventh commandment is a prohibition of impurity and every form of unlawful sensual indulgence; and the sixth forbids not only murder, but also pride, malice, and every form of mental passion. We see, thirdly, that in God's intention, the Ten Commandments were meant to pierce even to the dividing of the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow; that they are sharper than any two-edged sword, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

8. Now these truths are really involved in the actual structure of the Ten Commandments as they

are, though we could not have seen it until Jesus taught us the lesson.

(i.) For, first, observe that there is no self in *them;* every root of selfishness is utterly excluded from them. To most men and women self is everything. Their whole life is a room, lined with looking-glasses, presenting to them in all directions, and at every glance, innumerable reflections and multiplications of their own petty and worthless selves. With boundless self-importance, as though the world was made for them, and everybody was looking at them and thinking of them, they make themselves, their own low selves, the whole. Like the haughty and insolent lady in old Rome, they would welcome a plague if it made more room for themselves in the streets. They would sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes. They would rejoice to make their fortune out of an accursed trade, no matter how many souls were tempted and ruined by it. They would ruin the commerce and the peace of a whole country to get a little more pay. They would break up the very universe, if, out of it, they could make for themselves a comfortable footstool. They are their own gods—sick worshippers of dead idols—anxious only and always to fill the palsied hand which their vile self stretches out to their sated yet insatiate desires.*

* "Though in particular undergods they differ, all men naturally agree in the great idol, self. Every man is by corrupt nature his own god. Was not this the first wickedness which corrupted our nature, 'Ye shall be as gods'? And it sticks to it still."—LEIGHTON.

Now when "God spake these words and said," He laid the axe at the root of this despicable idolatry. The Ten Commandments have no single word of recognition for self; and no one would be farther from their fulfilment than the self-adoring Pharisee, who, content with his own fancied safety and holiness, had no better word for the multitudes of whom Christ had compassion, than to say: "This people that knoweth not the law"—by which he only meant that they paid no attention to his own trumpery practises and opinions—"are accursed." But the Ten Commandments, obliterating selfishness altogether, and regarding even the temperance, soberness, and chastity which are included in the seventh commandment as part of a man's general duty to the world and to his God, recognize all man's obligations as involved in love and worship to his Creator, and in love and service to his fellow-men.

(ii.) And notice, further, that the Ten Commandments themselves *imply their own extension* from the acts of the body to the thoughts of the heart. For alike the first commandment and the last commandment forbid nothing more nor less than an evil thought. And herein the code bears conspicuous testimony to its own divine origin. Search all the codes of the nations through, in every age since the world began, the laws of Gautama, of Zoroaster, of Confucius, of Manu, of Solon, of Lycurgus, of the Twelve Tables, and not in one of them will you find one law forbidding an evil thought, like "Thou shalt not covet."

Why is this? Because human law only forbids that of which it can take cognizance. It can take no cognizance of the thoughts of the heart. But God can. Naked and open to Him are the most secret thoughts. He searcheth the very reins of the heart. The divine code, therefore, proves its divine origin by forbidding that crime of guilty thoughts which are to human judgment-seats impalpable. To it, thoughts are as real as acts. It says, therefore, among the thunders of Sinai, Seeing that thou hast to deal with God and not with man: "Guard well thy thoughts, for thoughts are heard in Heaven." And how awfully necessary is it that it should do so! For every sin that man can commit begins, begins only, begins always, in an evil thought; and that beginning of sin, in the evil thought, is as the letting out of waters, though with startling rapidity the trickling driblet swells into the overwhelming flood! "Out of the heart," said our Lord, "proceed evil thoughts:" first, only evil thoughts—and perhaps you deceive yourself with the devil's falsehood, "What harm can there be in an evil thought?"—but then all that black, damning catalogue of abominable sins, evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, deceit, pride, lasciviousness, an evil eye. And this forbiddance of evil thoughts is, further, most necessary, because a man may be outwardly decent and moral, and yet, alas! to his own deep misery and his own abiding peril, his heart may be a very sink and sewer of iniquity and all uncleanness.

I have known men, who seemed and who I believe were good and innocent, and yet, as though the house of their life had been built over undrained and malarious places, they have, in their delirium, to the horror of those who loved them, poured out words and thoughts of blasphemy and uncleanness. We should do worse than wrong if, in such cases, we condemned them as hypocrites; but yet such self-revelations, so ghastly in their helpless unconsciousness, are terrible answers to the question of Solomon: "Who can say I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin?" And therefore these Ten Commandments, even as they stand, since they regard each thought as a criminal transgression, are eternal witnesses to the loving urgency of God's appeal: "My son, give Me thy heart."

9. If then the law, as God's honored slave, be designed to train us into Christian manhood, we are now in a position to understand more clearly what the Ten Commandments mean.

We see that, in all their breadth, the first commandment means, Worship God exclusively; the second, Worship God spiritually; the third, Reverence Him in your words; the fourth, Reverence Him on His day; the fifth, Reverence Him in every form of sacred authority which comes from Him.

So that the summary of this first table is that life is worship. And then, turning to the second table, we see that the sixth commandment is the law of kindness; the seventh, the law of purity; the eighth,

the law of honesty; the ninth, the law of truthfulness; the tenth, the law of contentment. So that the summary of the second table is that life is Love.

10. And, the commandments being thus understood, do we not all see how lofty, how beautiful, how comprehensive is this high ideal? What nobler rule of all life could we have than this,—Love God, be submissive, be orderly, be kind, be pure, be just, be truthful, be contented? All virtue, all holiness, all religion is in this. Do this, and thou shalt live!

11. Ah, yes, if man had never fallen, there would have been no difficulty. But how is it with us now? Is it not true that the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good, but we are carnal, sold under sin? You know very well that, if we have at all tried to keep God's commandments, to none of us has that path of faithfulness in duty been an easy path. It is no "primrose path of dalliance," trodden to the sound of dance-music, where now and then we can rest on some "mossy pillow blue with violets"; no; but, in proportion to your sincerity, you have known that it is a path craggy and uphillward, and often strewn with thorns, to be trodden sometimes with bleeding feet and aching brow. Only you will then have learnt that, if we persevere in it, its thorns turn to flowers—not poisonous, not hiding serpents among them, like those on the path of vice—and that at last,

> The toppling crags of Duty scaled,
> Lie close upon the shining table-lands
> To which our God Himself is moon and sun.

12. But, meanwhile, till we have attained this, and not by our own strength, how menacing and how deathful does God's law become! Like her in the Knight's Dream of Raphael, it carries in one hand the book of duty, "This do, and thou shalt live"; but in the other the drawn sword, "Do it not, and thou shalt perish." How exceptionless, how inexorable, is the menace of the Law without the Gospel! How vain the effort to win salvation by any attempt to live morally without the grace of Christ! Nor does Christ in any way render the obligation less absolute. Nay, as we have seen, He fearfully increases its stringency. How awful, again, is the warning of St. James, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all." * Why? Because he violates the sacred principle of obedience; because he defies the eternal decree of God. If you are forbidden to go out of an enclosure, it matters not whether you break out of it at one spot or at another. So that if you are dishonest, it will not avail you that you are not unclean; and if you are impure, it will not avail you that you are not a murderer or a liar; and if you are none of these, it will not avail you if you are a covetous man, which is an idolater. So that now you understand why the law, taken alone, would reduce us to abject and absolute despair. For, taken alone, it reveals to us three

* "The authority is the same and equal in all. The golden thread on which these pearls are stringed, if it be broken in any one part, it scatters them all."—LEIGHTON.

terrible things. (1) It shows us a God of awful purity, of inexorable holiness, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, who chargeth His angels with folly, and in whose sight the very heavens are not clean; a jealous God, a besetting God, who sees us, not as we should like to be esteemed, but as we are, and whose eyes read, through all veils of darkness and secrecy, the inmost imaginations of our heart. (2) And, over against this awful God, it shows us sin in all its hideous seductiveness, in all its dark and devilish malignity, in all its overwhelming peril. (3) And then it shows us ourselves, in awful union with sin, in awful contrast with God. It shows us the hideousness of our naked hearts, their sunless caverns, their unclean imagery, their leprous stains. It points us to some guilty, dishonest, impure, abject, shrinking creature, and says, "Look at that vileness. It is thyself!" Herein lies the awfulness of the law which worketh death. Its very perfection reveals to us the frightful discord of our beings, the unfathomable gulf which seems to yawn between us and God. And now you can understand why Bunyan, in the "Pilgrim's Progress," represents Moses as so furious and terrific, knocking Faithful down terribly with a word and a blow, and dragging Christian under the threatening crags of Sinai.* And now you can understand

* "So Christian turned out of the way to go to Mr. Legality's house for help; but behold, when he was got here hard by the hill, it seemed so high, and also that side of it that was near the wayside hung so much over, that Christian was afraid to venture further, lest the hill should fall on his head. . . . There came also flashes of

why Michael Angelo invests the mighty lawgiver, in the shaggy fell of his vast beard, with so menacing and repellant a majesty.

Now too you can understand the despair, and horror, and self-loathing which have so often beaten down and drowned the soul of man. You can understand what made David cry, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me; but lo! Thou requirest truth in the inward parts"; —and what made Job cry, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes";—and what made Isaiah cry, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips!"—and what made Paul cry, "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And now you understand what St. Paul meant by "the *curse* of the law"; and "the law worketh wrath"; and "by the law is the knowledge of sin." The God-revelation, the self-revelation of the law, taken alone, is as the lightning flash which reveals the perils to the terror of which it adds. And when man has not fled to Christ from this meeting of the sea of

fire out of the hill, that made Christian afraid that he should be burned." Compare the experience of Faithful: "Now when I had got about half-way up, I looked behind, and saw one coming after me swift as the wind. . . . So soon as this man overtook me, it was but a word and a blow, for down he knocked me and laid me for dead." *Christian.* "That man that overtook you was Moses. He spareth none, neither knoweth he how to show mercy to those that transgress his law."

calamity with the sea of crime, from this burden of guilt united with misery, then cometh the midnight!

The sin has been sinned: the man at last sees it as it is in the unnatural glare of his guilty conscience. "Iniquity hath played her part, and now Vengeance leaps upon the stage." Have none of you ever experienced it?—this blighting consciousness of guilt and utter vileness; the felt abhorrence of God; the horror of shame, when the fires of hell burn in the heart; when "thought calleth to fear; fear whistleth to horror; horror beckoneth to despair, and saith, Come help me to torment this sinner. One saith that she cometh from this sin; another saith that she cometh from that sin; so he goes through a thousand deaths and cannot die. Irons are put upon his body like a prisoner, all his lights are put out at once." The explanation of all the most frightful tragedies of life is here; the ravings of the lunatic, the scaffold of the felon, the head shattered by the pistol-shot, the wards of the hospital where lie the self-made victims of lust and drunkenness. All this, and every form of mental anguish which is the hideous progeny of remorse, issues from the death of sin. It comes from the gnawing and tormenting conscience, awakened by the law to the knowledge of sin. When a man realizes, with utter self-disgust, the discord and duality of his life; when the law which is in the members has warred against the law which is in the mind, and has brought us into captivity to the law of sin; then the soul is forced to cry out with tor-

mented Job, "If I be wicked, why then labor I in vain? If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me."

13. But these considerations must not for a moment lead you to disparage the glory of the Ten Words of God. St. Paul, indeed, calls them "the letter that killeth," "the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones," and "the ministration of condemnation." * He even summarizes the law of commandments contained in ordinances as "the enmity" † and "the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us." ‡ But in all these passages he is showing that this law must never be judged of as though it stood alone. It presupposes, it necessitates, it leads to the Gospel. The transient, he shows, is the vestibule to the eternal. The threat never stands apart from the good tidings. The menaces of death are cancelled by the obedience of Christ. Even in the old dispensation, the broken tablets lay in the golden ark, overshadowed by the wings of cherubim, who looked into the mystery of the mercy-seat sprinkled with atoning blood. "Thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark, and in the ark shalt thou put the testimony that I shall give thee, and there will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony." Those cherubim were not the cheru-

* 2 Cor. iii. 6–11. † Eph. ii. 15. ‡ Col. ii. 14.

bim of the flaming sword which prevented all access to the tree of life in the Paradise of God, but the cherubim who pledged God's mercy for all humble access to His presence. And thus the very deathfulness of the law became a source of life. "The law worketh wrath," and "by the law is the knowledge of sin"; yet it leads us to the love of God as its source, and to the hope of forgiveness for its violation. The law of death was no less the law of the love which had been antecedently and simultaneously revealed, which would in due time be fully manifested on the Mount of Transfiguration. There the Lord of love and life stood with the fiery prophets of Sinai and of Carmel, and the fire which had menaced fury and vengeance was seen to be but another aspect of the unconsuming fire of love. And in the light of this revelation "we are not under the law, but under grace."

14. My friends, every sinner here—and what man is he who sinneth not?—has heard this terrible voice of most just judgment, has felt something of this burden, and sense of the wrath of God. And they who are at this moment guiltiest with unrepented sin have felt it most. Now the law can give them no further help. They have broken it. It has nothing to offer but threats and retribution. Repentance, even if it could avail for the future, cannot atone for the violated past of sinfulness. And if you have thus known the cruelty of Satan, will you not accept the offered deliverance of Christ? Even the punishments, even

the menaces, even the unpitying sternness of the law, has no object for any one of us but to bring us to Christ. With Him is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. What else but mercy, what else but deliverance, what else but the bestowal of blessedness and consolation here, and eternal peace and bliss hereafter, was the object of His incarnation, of His teaching, of His death, of His ascension, of His eternal session at the right hand of God? Till you have come to Him, till you have found Him, you will find no calm, no happiness, no rest. When you *have* come to Him, when you have knelt in penitence at the cross and tomb, then you will experience His infinite compassion. He will take away the curse of the law. He will take away the handwriting which is against you, which is contrary to you, which now justly terrifies you. He will rend it asunder, and nail its torn fragments, so that they can no longer hurt or menace you, to the cross on which He died to save your souls. "Turn ye, why will ye die, oh, house of Israel? for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord." If the law has revealed to you God's righteousness, and your own depth of iniquity, let it drive you to Christ. With Him you will find not menace, but mercy; not wrath, but forgiveness; not death and hell, but everlasting life.

THE MANNER OF KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS.

"For the manner, it requireth that *toti*, we be whole observers of the law . . . with our whole soul and body. *Totum*, all the law . . . 'whatsoever thing I command you, observe to do it.' . . . For the continuance, *Totâ in vitâ est observanda.* It is to be kept always all the days of our life."—BISHOP ANDREWES, "The Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine at Large," p. 70 (ed. 1675).

"The actual and total breach of any one commandment, total, I mean, when the whole heart doth it, though happily it execute not all the obliquity which the compass of the sin admits, is an implicit, habitual, interpretative, and conditional breach of all."—BISHOP REYNOLDS.

"Ich wiewohl ich ein alter Doctor der heiligen Schrift bin, so bin ich noch nicht aus der Kinderlehre gekommen, und verstehe die zehn Gebote Gottes den Glauben und das Vaterunser noch nicht recht."—LUTHER.

Thy commandment is exceeding broad.*

Ps. cxix. 96.

I FEAR that many listen to the Ten Commandments as though they were idle and customary formulæ, and attach very little meaning to the *Kyrie eleison:* "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law." And this perhaps is because we do not understand their depth, and width, and breadth, and height. We do not grasp the fact that we stand before them as before the judgment-seat of God, and that they supply us with grounds of self-examination as searching as the eye of God Himself.† We do not understand that they are a law of fire, infolding, purifying, it may be even consuming. We do not grasp the fact that in themselves they are a law of death unto death, because they are holy and just and good, and we are unholy and unjust and evil; but that they become a law of life unto life if they lead us to Christ, for help to obey them, and

* This address was delivered to the young in St. Margaret's, Westminster.

† "If sin grows upon us, and is committed more frequently, or gets a victory with less difficulty, or is obeyed more readily and entertained with a freer complacency, then we love not God as He requires; we divide between Him and sin, and God is not the Lord of all our faculties."—Jeremy Taylor, "Of the Decalogue," Works, ii. 418.

pardon in that we have transgressed them. If we would be aroused to understand something more of their preciousness, let us turn to the 119th Psalm. That Psalm might truly be called *Michtam*, "a golden Psalm." "The Law or Word of God, which the Bible Society proposes to furnish for eighteenpence, is by no means to be had at that low figure; the whole long Psalm being little more than one agonizing prayer for the gift of it; and a man's life well spent if he has truly received and learnt to read ever so little a part of it."* The Psalmist longs to feel the grandeur of God's law, to taste its sweetness, to rise to the fulness of its requirements. It is an alphabetical Psalm. The Hebrew alphabet contains twenty-two letters; the Psalm has twenty-two divisions. Every verse in the first division begins with A; of the second with B; of the third with G; till in the last division every verse begins with T, the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It is therefore the A B C of all that the sweet singer of Israel regarded as most precious in human wisdom. He speaks of the law under every possible name; counsels, commandments, decrees, judgments, laws, righteousness, statutes, testimonies, word. He felt the terror of the law, but because he was striving so earnestly to obey it, he felt also its sweetness. "The law of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure and giveth wisdom to the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart; the commandment of

* See Ruskin, "Fors Clavigera."

the Lord is pure, and giveth light unto the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean and endureth forever; the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. Moreover, by them is thy servant taught, and in keeping of them there is great reward." *

2. Now is that the sort of language which you would consider natural if the Ten Commandments—and it was exactly this moral law of which the Psalmist was thinking—were such every-day, commonplace, easy affairs as perhaps some of you take them to be? Do you at all suppose that they are only meant for the most flagrant criminals; for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for men-stealers, for liars, and perjured persons?

Perhaps you think, like the ill-informed young Pharisee, "All these have I kept from my youth." I, you say, am not an atheist or a polytheist; I am not an idolater; I am not a profane swearer, or violent sabbath-breaker; I am a fairly good son; I am not a murderer, or an adulterer, or a thief, or a lying backbiter, nor do I covet too much what is not my own. Ah! do you indeed think that this surface-obedience is all the commandments require?—that God will be content with an outward respectability, shining like the iridescence over the corruption of a stagnant pool? What the commandments ask you

* Ps. xix.

is: Is God in all your thoughts? Have you in the dark places of your own heart no secret idol which is more to you than God? Do you never take His name in vain by offering to Him a careless and irreverent worship? Are your Sundays such a consecration of one day as to become the consecration of every day? Have you been to father and mother all that loving sons and daughters ought to be—grateful, loyal, considerate, and attentive to their wishes even when they are far away? Are you truly kind to all—even your enemies? Can you say, I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin? Is your conduct absolutely, transparently, unswervingly honest and honorable? Have you set such a watch before the door of your lips that you offend not with your tongue? Do you never sin even in thought? Which of you will dare to say that you are such perfect saints of God? that you are not constantly doing those things which you ought not to do, and leaving undone those things which you ought to do? If indeed you assert this, it only shows that you are puffed up with vanity and ignorance. "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" it is only when we confess our sins that God is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

3. For let me ask you to observe as regards the manner of our obedience, that it may be expressed in three Latin words: it must be as regards ourselves with all our power, *toti;* as regards the law, it must

be the whole law, *totum*—a complete obedience; as regards our time it must be a perpetual obedience, *semper;* an obedience all our lives long.*

(i.) It must be a whole-hearted obedience—*toti*, with all our being: for there is one God, and to love Him with all our hearts, and all our minds, and all our soul, and all our strength, and our neighbor as ourselves, is more than all burnt-offering and sacrifice. Many men, alas! are in this respect like Ananias and Sapphira—they lie to the Holy Ghost; they keep back part of the price. They will serve God with one part of their being, not with another; with their mind, for instance, in that they see how awful goodness is, and virtue in her shape how lovely, but not with their body in which reign unchecked the lusts of the flesh; Or with their body, in which they are sober, chaste, and temperate, but not with their mind, which is full of the lust of the eyes, worldliness, ambition, pride, revenge; Or again, professedly with the soul, in that they pay an outward respect to religion, call themselves Christians, pride themselves on their churchmanship, respect the shibboleths, wear the badges of piety, while they keep back from God their bodies—being impure or intemperate—and their minds, with which they shuffle off every thought of holiness as though it were a Sunday dress. To whom apply those words of Ezekiel: "They sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they show much

* See Bishop Andrewes, as quoted *supra*, p. 76.

love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." Alas! how many live two lives in one; outwardly, with eye-service, as men-pleasers, they are as glistening sepulchres; but within, in their secret retirements, in their inmost heart, they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Outwardly, they are as a temple on whose entablature is engraven holiness to the Lord; but in its dark, unseen recesses what chambers are there of unclean imagery! What incense is burned upon polluted altars! It is in vain! "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." He is, in this sense, a jealous God. He will not tolerate a divided service. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. If you are to serve God acceptably, you must serve Him wholly. How long halt ye between two opinions? "If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him."

(ii.) We must, then, obey God's law with all our being, *toti;* and also we must obey, *totum*, the whole law. How clearly St. James teaches this! "Whosoever," he says, "shall have kept the whole law, and yet have offended in one point, he has become guilty of all. For He that said, do not commit adultery, said also do not kill; so if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." You will see at once why this is and must be so. By breaking any one of God's laws you violate the principle of obedience on which they all depend. If I place a son in an enclosure to which there are ten gates, and if I say to him, "Your life, your happiness

depends on your not leaving that enclosure; for outside of it, in all places, sin glides like a serpent, crouches like a tiger at the door; and by my authority over you and by my love for you, and yours for me, I forbid you to leave it,"—what matters it if he disregards my command, and says, "I only went out at one gate, and not at any of the other nine"? Yet this is what we are all tempted to do. A man prides himself that he will not steal, or violate the law of chastity: what matters it if he is habitually speaking evil of and injuring his neighbor? It is perfectly easy to most men to give up every sin but one; it costs them nothing to give up sins to which they are not tempted, but everything to give up the sin to which they *are* tempted. What is it to God that they will give up every sin except the darling sin, the bosom sin, the besetting sin? That is the very sin which offends Him, which ruins them, which He requires them to give up. How piteous are the cries of sinners who plead for one reservation! Lancelot, noble in all other things, is dragged to earth by his guilty love for Guinevere.

> "Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
> Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break
> These bonds that so defame me: not without
> She wills it: would I if she willed it? Nay,
> Who knows? but if I would not, then may God,
> I pray Him, send a sudden Angel down
> To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
> And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
> Among the tumbled fragments of the hills."

The adulterous king in the great tragedy pleads with God in words infinitely pathetic, which are yet his own deepest condemnation:

"O, my offence is rank, it smells to Heaven!
* * * * *
May one be pardoned, and retain the offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law; but 'tis not so above:
There is no shuffling; there the action lies
In his true nature; and we ourselves compelled
E'en to the teeth and forehead of our faults
To give in evidence."

It is all vain sophistry, and the guilty heart's desperate deceitfulness. His one sin is the hand of fire which drags him down to hell.

"My words fly up, my thoughts remain below;
Words without thoughts never to heaven go."

The sinner is most often a sinner in many respects. "Whom have you ever seen contented with a single sin?"* Sin is linked to sin with nets and meshes innumerable, and the thief passes very easily into the liar, and the adulterer and the drunkard may quite naturally become the murderer. But supposing that one sin does not plunge a man into a slough of many sins, he will be judged by his one sin, not by others.

"The sin that practice burns into the blood,
And not the one dark hour which brings remorse,
Shall stamp us after of whose fold we be."

* St. Augustine.

The drunkard will not be judged as a murderer, but as a drunkard; nor will the adulterer be judged as a thief, but as an adulterer; and the man who is always slandering his brethren, either to gratify his own base heart, or to get money by it, or both, will be judged at the awful bar of God, not as anything else, but as a liar and slanderer; as that which the devil is—an accuser of his brethren. The devil, too, is a fisher of men. He does not care in the least by what bait he catches them. The red fly of murder, or the black fly of uncleanness, or the many-colored fly of falsehood, is all one to him; he does not care what bait the greedy fish rushes at and swallows. Whichever bait it swallows it is caught, and in any case it is hurt and lacerated; and if Christ disentangle it not, the devil will tear out the hook by which he has enticed it, and leave it sorely to gasp out its ebbing life upon the shore.* And it is because Christ would teach us that we must thus keep God's law—*toti* with all our being, and *totum* in its entirety—that He says with such seeming sternness, but such deep true love: "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Gehenna. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to enter into Heaven with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire." Our strongest watch must ever be placed, not

* James i. 14: ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος.

at that part of the fortress of our souls at which we are not assailed, but at the weak point where the assault is most terrible. Our prayer must ever be—

> "The dearest idol I have known,
> Whate'er that idol be;
> Help me to tear it from its throne,
> And worship only Thee!"

4. Once more, we must keep this awful and beneficent and mercifully exacting law of God, not only *totum*, in its completeness; not only *toti*, with all our beings; but also *semper*, at all times. Obedience to it is not a thing which we can put on and off like a glove, or like a shoe. It is not a thing for the day only, or the night only, but for every sentient hour. It is not a thing for Sundays only, but for all days, and for every day. It is not a law for one period of life, and not another, but for all periods of life, from the cradle to the grave; and if but one of these is lost, not only is there serious peril lest all be lost, but the loss of that one is a terrible source of sorrow and weakness. Simple and obvious as this law of perpetual obedience may seem, how incessantly, how all but universally is it violated!

(i.) How many there are, for instance, who think that business is one thing and religion another; that they may be kept quite separate, and need not permeate each other. They think that every day of the week they may not only devote themselves exclusively to Mammon, but may adulterate goods, and make unfair bargains, and overreach the ignorant, and

grind the faces of the poor, and by vile trades tempt their neighbors continually to the utter destruction and degradation of body, soul, and spirit;—and yet that on Sunday they can put on their best clothes, and come to church, and cheat God as they can cheat men into the notion that they are highly respectable citizens and good Christians!

(ii.) Again, how many men secretly think that they can practically do as they like all their available lives long, but can repent on their deathbeds! It is the favorite delusion which Satan encourages, and of all others the most futile. I have seen many deathbeds. I have seen drunkards die, and the dishonest, and the unclean, and the worldly. I never once saw a deathbed repentance yet. Men on their deathbeds—with confused minds, with dulled perceptions, with bodies shaken by pain, with hearts full of uncertainty and worldly cares, cherishing generally to the very last the secret belief that they will recover, as is often observed when men are already almost passing through the gate of death—are mostly in the worst possible condition for the mighty effort which a sincere repentance costs. Many deathbeds are like that of the wicked Cardinal in Shakespeare's "Henry VI.":

> "Lord Cardinal, if thou think'st on heaven's bliss,
> Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope.
> He dies, and makes no sign. O God, forgive him!"

Repentance, sincere and absolute, followed by restitution, by amendment, by absolute devotion, is

not so common a spectacle at any time. And certainly it is not often on the deathbed that this mighty work is done.

(iii.) And, lastly, oh! be on your guard, my friends; and you, above all, my younger friends, against another lie of Satan. Let every boy, every youth, every young man who hears me—remembering that God means you to obey His law *semper*, always—be on his guard against, and utterly spurn from him that common and most deadly lie of the devil that "you may have your fling"—that "youths must be youths"—that "you must sow your wild oats." Oh, listen not to the devil's whisper when he persuades you to gaze at, and think of, and pluck, and eat the forbidden fruit, and says, "Ye shall not surely die; yet shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." All these are devil's proverbs, and devil's lies. Will you have them, or will you have God's truth? These lies of his are against the whole experience of the world. Why does he plead with you so earnestly and seductively for just one sin? Why, but because he knows that the fish which will nibble at the hook will be caught by the hook; because he knows that all sins begin with one sin; because he knows that a boy's sin so often means a life's sin, and a life's shame, and a life's destruction. Why does he persuade you that you may have your fling? Because he knows that the fling is so often the fling over a precipice; and that when a youth throws loose the reins of his soul's chariot and touches the wild steeds of passion

with the spur of indulged appetite, the path is downhillward, and the pace is mad, and the end is headlong death. Why is he so anxious that you should sow your wild oats? Because he knows that, if you believe him, you will have to reap what you sow. Sow wild oats, and what shall the harvest be? You shall reap wild oats, barren, bitter, poisonous, which blight the wholesome soil. You are hungry, he says; gratify your lust, indulge your appetite, sell your birthright; what good shall this birthright do you? Sell it for this red steaming mess of pottage! Ay, sell it; but then the birthright will be lost, and lost forever; and your life be maimed, and long years after shall come the great and exceeding bitter cry; and though you may be forgiven at last, you will never in this life recover that lost birthright, though you seek it earnestly with tears. If you give yourself to Satan at all, there is a terrible chance that he will master you; that he will strengthen all that is base and unclean in you; that he will blight all that is good and pure and beautiful in you; that he will enslave you to the end. Therefore remember—above all, you, my children in the choir, and every boy and every youth here present, remember—that as you are bound to keep the whole law *totum*, and with all your hearts *toti*, so you are bound to keep it *semper*, always. What! will you give Satan the bloom and brightness and vigor of your lives, and ask your God, your Father, your Saviour, the Holy Spirit who loves you, to be content with their dotage and decrepitude?

"A flower, when offered in the bud,
Is no mean sacrifice";—

will you lay the bud, with all its promise and fragrance, in the foul and cruel hand of the wicked one, and only offer to God the worm and the canker, the faded colors, the corrupted leaves? Will you pour the bright libation of life's fresh wine on the table of devils, and try vainly to reserve for God only the thick and bitter dribbling of its lees? Ah, do not so! Be on your guard in time against Satan's devices and cunning craftiness.

I will tell you how bad and blighted lives begin: the life of the deplorable drunkard; the life of the degraded wife-beater; the life of the harlot and the felon; the life of which the so-called home is as the lair of wild beasts; the life which hides itself in the cell of the lunatic and the grave of the suicide. Many a million of such lives seemed as fair and bright in promise as that of any young boy here. See them young and happy in the day-school or the Sunday-school, clothed, as it were, and in their right mind—then look on twenty, thirty, forty years. This blighted, loafing, disgraced, bleareyed man; this bent thing of uselessness and scorn who will soon die of delirium tremens, and be huddled into a pauper's grave, is he that once bright, laughing, promising boy? Yes, he is. Look on this picture and on that! What has made the frightful difference? How did it begin? It began in the boy thinking himself too fine and too much a man to

love, honor, or obey his parents any more. It began in forsaking the guide of his youth and forgetting the covenant of his God. It began in bad companionship, corrupting good manners. It began in broken Sabbath-days, and turning the back on Holy Communion, and neglecting the worship of the Church of God. It began by walking in the way of the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners, sitting in the seat of the scornful. It began when he went like a fine young fool to be treated or to stand treat in vile drink at the public-houses. It began in the twilight, in the evening, in the black dark night, when the young fool in his desperate simplicity, led by Satan, went as an ox to the slaughter, as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till a dart struck through his own liver; and, in the midst of that ghastly cor ıpany, which he now has joined, of which he now is one, he discovers in shame and irremediable horror—afterwards, too late, in the ruins of his life—he discovers that the dead are there, and her guests in the depths of hell. Ah, my dear young people, one and all of you, may the grace of God make you more happy and more timely wise! And that it may do so, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh in which thou shalt say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'"

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

" That thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD."—DEUT. xxviii. 58.

" Thou whose name alone is JEHOVAH art the Most High over all the earth."—Ps. lxxxiii. 18.

" Let them praise Thy great and terrible name; for it is holy."—Ps. xcix. 3.

" Maxima pars eorum quæ scimus est minima pars eorum quæ nescimus."—HERACLITUS. See Cic. *De nat. Deorum*, i. 22.

" Da stehen wir an dem A B C aller heilsamen Erkenntniss! Er ist das A und O der Anfang und das Ende."—AHLFELD, " Katechismus-predigten," p. 12.

Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*

EXOD. xx. 3.

THERE are multitudes of ways in which this text might be treated; there is only one way in which, in this place, I care to treat it; and that is, most simply and most practically. I might treat it philosophically, and talk to you about a Being without body, parts, and passions. I might treat of it historically, and speak of Polytheism, and Ditheism, and Pantheism, and of all those many aberrations in which, though God hath made of one all nations of the earth,

* "There shall be to thee no other gods (or no strange gods; for *alii* some render it, some *alieni*) עַל פָּנַי, to my face or at my face; *i.e.*, in comparison or competition with Me" (comp. Deut. xxxii. 39). "I am He, and there is no god with Me, or beside Me" (Mark xii. 32). "There is one God, *καὶ οὐκ ἐστιν ἄλλος πλὴν αὐτοῦ.*" "The precept, as most of the rest, is in form negative and prohibitive, but supposeth and implieth somewhat affirmative and positive (thou shalt have Me for thy God), as the rest also may be conceived to do." "It implies as to internal disposition or mind, honor, dread, love, trust, hope; in outward expression, praise and blessing, submission, obedience" (Matt. xxii. 37; Luke x. 27; Deut. vi. 5). "To worship other gods is a vanity of all most lamentable (Rom. i. 25); a pursuance of shadows, an embracing of clouds, a building in air, or mere vacuity; a leaning upon that which hath no substance, or no strength to support us; a dreaming and doting upon mere nothing; whence those false deities well in Scripture are termed *μάταια, vanities.*"—BARROW, Works, vi. 481–483.

to seek Him, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, yet man hath sought out many inventions. I might treat it argumentatively, and try to prove to you the existence of a God from creation; and the general consent of men; and the phenomena of matter, of life, of consciousness, of the moral sense, of revelation, of experience. I might treat of it theologically, and speak of the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance.

I might deal with it biblically, and string together texts to prove that God has represented Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God. Above all (and this might, indeed, be a fruitful and profitable method), I might speak of God as revealed in His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. That is, and must be, the theme of many sermons. But it is most desirable, now and then, to begin, as it were, at the very beginning: to dig down to the very foundations; to see whether we come up, and can come up to our duties as ordinarily good men, before we enter on our Christian standard in which we are called to be saints.

I shall not treat it in any of these ways. I have not the least desire to appear learned, or profound, or exhaustive, or metaphysical. I have an intense desire to be practical. It is my most earnest prayer, in this and in every sermon, so to speak that, by the aid of God's Holy Spirit, I may awaken some conscience; touch some heart; send you away with only this thought—How can I be a better man or a better

woman? How can I more worthily fulfil my duties to Him who made me?

2. I am speaking to a promiscuous assembly, composed of persons of many different ranks, ages, countries, and attainments; but I may assume that I am speaking to Christians, and that to Christians I may adopt the method of all Scripture, which is not to argue, but to appeal; not to demonstrate, but to witness.

I may assume that there is not one person here present who denies the Being or the Personality of a God. It would be a waste of time to prove that there is a God to those who are already persuaded of it. In fact, the conviction does not depend at all for its validity on any syllogism of logic. It depends on feelings and intuitions which antedate and transcend all reasoning, and are unspeakably more cogent. It is not, then, to those (if there be in reality any such) who deny, or persuade themselves that they deny, that there is a God, that I shall speak to-day; but to those who believe it, or persuade themselves that they believe it.

3. There is atheism and atheism; there is belief and belief. There is an atheism which is the Nemesis of moral degradation, like that of the ancient Paganism described by St. Paul in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

There is a nominal atheism, which, knowing not God, yet in some dim way does try to do His will.

And as there is a nominal atheism which is practi-

cal belief, so, alas! there is an infinitely more widespread nominal belief which is practical atheism. There is the belief of rebellion, which defies God. There is the belief of terror, which degrades God. There is the belief of worldliness, which ignores God. There is (grievous and terrible to admit) an orthodox atheism, "a practical atheism, orthodox in language and reverent in bearing, which can enter a Christian church, and charm the conscience to rest with shadowy traditions." Our danger is, not to worship other gods, and so to break this first commandment; but rather to have in reality no God, like those Israelites of whom God said, "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me."

4. But in reality to have no God, is, in one form or other, to worship other gods. Who were the gods after whom the backsliding Jews, again and again, went astray? Were they not devil-deities—Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, and Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and Moloch the abomination of the children of Ammon?

And what were these but incarnate lusts, deified appetites, nature-powers, which passed into the representatives, the prototypes, the sanctioners of passions of dishonor? Men worshipped Moloch, because the terror of guilty hearts made them sanguinary and cruel. They worshipped Baalpeor, because, like brute-beasts, in the things which they naturally knew, in those things they corrupted themselves. They

worshipped Mammon, because they cared more for gold than for God. Are there no Moloch worshippers now, who are utterly indifferent to the agonies of their fellows? who, so that the stream of gold roll into their bursting coffers, are indifferent that it should be wet with the tears of women, and red with the blood of men? who will complacently ride in their carriages, while they draw rents from rotting tenements, where fever and diphtheria are epidemic, where modesty and decency are impossible, where even children, all squalor and disease and rags, grow up in terribly premature experience of harlotry and crime? Is this a more innocuous idolatry than the other? Does not St. Paul speak of "covetousness, which is idolatry"? Are there no worshippers of Baalpeor, the god of sensualism and uncleanness, now, as in the desert, where, while Moses was with God, amid the clouds of Sinai, the people plunged into the lowest of debauchery? Wander in the streets of London at night; and, if it indeed be true that there are in this city alone eighty thousand fallen women, and that every fresh year witnesses additions to this holocaust of womanhood; if these multitudes for whom Christ died are thus given up to shame and agony and death; if youths and men and multitudes are openly and shamelessly tempted to poison with unseen leprosy their own blood and the life of generations yet unborn; if London be, as foreign visitors have said that it is, in this respect the most unblushing and cynically immoral of modern capitals, are there no

worshippers of Baalpeor now? Is there no need of a Moses to stamp into powder these bestial idols? No provocation to God to let the fire of His plague burn for purification among the offending sons of men?

5. Men seem to think that these Ten Commandments are something Jewish; that God did not really mean them to be kept.

Why, this first commandment, "I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt have none other gods but Me," is nothing less than the key to man's whole existence! It is the eternal basis of all worship and of all morality.

(i.) It is the basis of all worship. What is worship? There is a worship which is no worship. In many ages and countries men have attached importance to childish formalities and ceremonials, and if they like these as adjuncts and symbols, I do not know that there is any harm in them. But if men are tempted to treat them as essential, to rest in them as in themselves acceptable to God, they should be told that, apart from sincerity and righteousness, they will become as meaningless an insult to that supreme Majesty which requires of us innocence alone, as is the clack of the Tartar's prayer-mill, twirling out twenty thousand prayers a day, in the wind or on the stream. They are far less acceptable to God, when they are made a substitute for high morality and heart devotion, than the fetish of the New Zealander. The simplicity of a Primitive Methodist chapel, if Christ be in the hearts of the worshippers, may be more the haunt of angels and archangels, the court of God and

the image of Heaven, than the most gorgeous minister where rubrics are made more important than righteousness. The silence of a Quakers' meeting may be immeasurably more dear to Him who searcheth hearts, and who hates shams, than the most glorious anthems and the most superb ceremonials, where men are thinking of themselves and their own hearts' lusts, and not of Him.

> "He asks no taper lights, on high surrounding
> The priestly altar and the saintly grave;
> No dolorous chant, no organ-music sounding,
> No incense clouding up the twilight nave.
>
> "Oh, brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother;
> Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there:
> To worship rightly is to love each other,
> Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer."

"God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." *

(ii.) But the first commandment is also the sole sure basis of all morality. Nothing but the belief in a God will either maintain the moral law in its sovereignty over our consciences, or restore it to power when greed and passion have usurped its place. Men have tried to base ethics on utilitarianism, on self-interest, on systems of rewards and punishments, present or future.

* "Our prayers are dull and yawning, and drop over our lips without any spirit or life in them; how often do we beg God to hear us when we scarce hear ourselves? and to grant us an answer when we scarce know what it is that we have asked? We make our requests so coldly and indifferently, as if we only begged to be denied."—BISHOP HOPKINS.

Conduct cannot rest securely on any such basis. It can only rest securely on the eternal will of a living God, whose commandments are righteousness. Some theologians have, with perverse error, talked contemptuously of "mere morality." As if mere morality were not the very end and object of all true religion! As if religion without mere morality were not the deadliest of all delusions, and the emptiest of all shams! As if the commandments were a set of rules drawn up by human prudence! As if the very meaning of our lives were not that God claims, for our good, the absolute authority over the moral obedience of men! Mere morality! As if there were any such thing as the moral law apart from God! As if the conscience, which is the law of Sinai in the heart of each one of us, were not the very voice of God within us! As if there were not a sense in which we might truly say that "God is the moral law!" Mere morality! Why, the Lord of glory lived that men might attain to it, and died that they might be redeemed from transgression of its laws! Mere morality! You might hide yourself in the desert; you might spend your days, like some morbid mediæval monk, in kissing the five wounds of the crucifix; you might go to seven services and a fasting communion every day, and prepare for it by confessing to a priest no better than yourself; you might dole your goods to feed the poor; you might give your body to be burned; yet if you were at heart a dishonest, mean, cruel, impure intriguer, many a man who never enters a church and

never kneels to say a prayer might be far nearer heaven than you. Did not Christ tell the scrupulous Pharisees, who tithed mint and anise and cumin, and for a pretence made long prayers, that the publicans and the harlots were more likely to enter the kingdom of Heaven than they? Mere morality! Would to God we had more of it, alike amongst priests and people! And it is just because men fail to grasp this truth that these commandments are so infinitely necessary, both to nations and to men; and that there is not one misery and shame in life which does not come from disobedience to them.

6. "God spake these words and said, I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have none other gods but Me." If nations were not practically atheist; if they did not think it possible, like those foolish Samaritans of old, to serve the Lord and worship other gods; if they only knew that God is not to be mocked, and is not content with those who lie to the Holy Ghost, and keep back part of the price of their souls—could sin and vice flourish in Christian nations as now they flourish? Take but one instance, and that near home. Foreign inquirers and English writers are at one in telling us that, in spite of our poor law, in spite of our overflowing and enormous wealth, in spite of the millions which we spend on education, in spite of the multiplication of our religious ordinances, there is more hideous pauperism and festering squalor here in London, and generally here in England, than in any country in the world. Last Sunday a nobleman, who

was unable to get into the Abbey for the crowd, walked about its neighborhood, and told me that, having just returned from long visits to European and other countries, he had seen in two hours sights of misery and human shipwreck in this our serenely self-complacent England such as he had not seen in any other land. What is the main cause of this? The main cause of this, as every one knows who knows anything about the poor, is contained in one monosyllable. Ask the faithful and experienced clergy of poor centres; ask the police; ask the magistrates; ask the judges; ask the jail-chaplains; ask the hospital physicians; ask the heads of asylums of criminal lunatics; ask the teachers of schools in pauper districts—and every one of them will answer you in the same monosyllable—drink! It is drink that yearly pauperizes thousands; that yearly kills its tens of thousands; that blights unnumbered lives; that blasts the peace of hundreds of families; that kindles the fires of hell on countless hearths; that causes an infant mortality, in one English year, to which the Moloch-slaughter of a hundred years of Ammon was as nothing; which has decimated many of those humbler races which represent as it were the infancy of the world, and causes them to curse our name; which pours into the river basins of Africa its accursed flood of gin and rum to the destruction of its peoples:—and yet, even to this day, the conscience of England is not aroused, nay, is callous to the curse and the criminality of leaving such a state

of things to flourish unchecked, like some bloated and poisonous fungus growing on the decay of our best prosperity. Why? Because in the hearts of thousands greed and gold and custom and selfishness are gods; and while our churches are busy in endless squabbles about the infinitely little, we have not learnt the meaning either of the first or of the second commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself."

7. And, if we be too small-natured to care what nations do, how many of us here present have learnt, as individuals, the meaning and force of this commandment? Not one of us perfectly, very few of us at all; for really to have learnt its meaning would be to have acquired a principle of conduct which would render impossible a life of wilful and willing sin. Are there none here who are conscious, as I speak, that their hearts are not right with God? Is there no man or woman here guilty at this moment of breaking—consciously breaking, habitually breaking—the sovereign law of God? Are there none here who frequently take God's name in vain? None here who habitually despise His Sabbaths, and by insolent irreverence, even in their outward demeanor, much more by their words and in their hearts, profane His sanctuary? Are there none here who have been inconsiderate, unkind, ungrateful to parents, contemptuous of their wishes, indifferent to their feelings, disobedient to their commands? Are there none here who are cherishing in their hearts the

spirit of hatred, envy, and malice against some of their fellow-men? Have none of you failed to recognize how high, supreme, inexorable, is the obligation of personal chastity in your own lives, "how sacred is the blush of innocence on young human cheeks," how deadly the curse of vile imaginations, how certain the menace that if any man destroy the temple of God, him will God destroy?

Have none of you, in trades, or in professions, or in any other dealings with your fellow-men, been guilty of those small dishonesties about which you vainly try to deceive yourselves with worldly sophisms, but which are in God's sight *great* dishonesties, because they are conscious violations, made for the sake of your own petty gains, of His supreme law of justice between man and man? Have none of you told lies—perhaps what you called white lies, or society lies, but none the less deflections from the truth, exaggerations, inventions, misrepresentations, concealments, subterfuges, equivocations, acted lies, glistening, softly whispered lies; lies about yourselves; lies anonymously and in print which you often knew to be lies about others; half-truths which are often the vilest of lies, stories twisted into lies to make them more pointed; lies which, when you did not give vogue to them with the direct purpose of lying, were yet due to the inner baseness of your own private interests, prejudices, and partial affections?

Are none of you living lives of murmuring fretfulness, discontented with your own lot, envious of every

lot except your own? Search your own hearts. Try your own selves. If our sins were to be written on our foreheads, would not the very best of us have to pull our hats over our eyes? Remember that our hearts are the sole acceptable sacrifice which we can offer to God. He requires victims without blemish. When the ancients pretended to offer a white ox on the altar of Jupiter, they would make a spotted ox pass as a white one, by chalking over the black marks upon it. Can God be so deceived with shams? Will He be taken in by the chalk-marks of our own hypocrisy?

My friends, no man who is a bad man could live the life he does, if he really grasped the meaning of this first commandment: "God spake these words and said, I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have none other gods but Me." Christians, before we ask ourselves whether we love Christ, is there not the preliminary question whether we so much as believe in God?

8. For, in conclusion, these words claim from us imperatively an absolute single-heartedness. When we are told that the Lord our God is a jealous God, it means that with Him a divided service is no service, and that He would be less than no God if He could be pleased with a heart which belongs more to Moloch, or to Mammon, or to Baalpeor, than to Him. It means, too, that He is a besetting God. He is about our path and about our bed. There is not a thought in our hearts but He knoweth it altogether. As the

eye of a portrait seems to follow us about a room, so God's eye follows us. It may be a thought of terror, or it may be a thought of blessing. It was one of the diabolic tortures of the Inquisition, that, at every moment, waking or sleeping, without the intermission of one second, the victim should know that two odious eyes were always fixed upon him. What must it be to the guilty man to know that, even through the blackest curtains of secrecy and midnight, God spieth out all his ways?

But to the good man it is an infinite blessing that God at least knows him, that God at least can understand him, and guides him with His eye. There are many who commit deadly sins, whose whole life is a falsity, and who yet for the time seem to be fat and well-liking. There are others on whose conscience even a fault, which men would regard as slight and venial, lies like a spark of fire, so tender is their conscience. What is the difference between such men? The criminal says, "There is no God," or he says, "Tush, thou God carest not for it." The good man knows that even if he could put on the cap of darkness, and become invisible, there would still be two witnesses of any misdoing of his, more terrible than if it were blazoned to all the world beside. He himself will know it, and it will torture him with inward shame; God will know it, and his heart will ache at the thought of having offended God, or being alienated from Him. And therefore he never tries or wishes to hide himself from God. The life of such a

man is swayed by the sovereign thought, which is to him a blessed thought, "Thou God seest me." It becomes to him the first and most supreme incentive to virtue; and if, to the best of human frailty, he is able, not only in letter but in spirit, to keep the other commandments of God, it is because as a Christian, having learnt to see God in Christ, and having come to the Father by the Son, he has learnt what that meaneth, "God spake these words and said, I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have none other Gods but Me."

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

"Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face; should I be inquired of at all by them? Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart . . . I the Lord will answer him . . . according to the multitude of his idols."—EZEK. xiv. 3, 4.

"Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man."—ACTS xvii. 29.

For other New Testament warnings against idolatry, see 1 Cor. x. 7, 14; Gal. v. 20; Rev. ix. 20, xxi. 8, xxii. 15.

"The Holy of Holies was left empty to teach thee, O Israel, that no place containeth the Eternal One, but thine heart is His sanctuary."—HILLEL.

"It were better to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of Him; for the one is unbelief, the other is contumely; and certainly superstition is the reproach of the Deity. The causes of superstition are pleasing and sensual rites and ceremonies; excess of outward and pharisaical holiness; over-great reverence of tradition, which cannot but load the Church; the stratagems of prelates for their own ambition and lucre; the favoring too much of good intentions which openeth the gate to conceits and novelties; the taking an aim at divine matters by human, which cannot but breed mixture of imaginations."—BACON, Essay xvii., "Of Superstition."

"Nor can we reasonably suppose any distinction or reservation from any idolatry (or any worshipping of images) as lawful or allowable to Christians; since the Apostles as they found it universally prohibited to the Jews, so they continued to charge Christians against it. This discourse hath more force, considering that the same reason upon which this law was enacted doth still apparently continue; still men unmeasurably affecting this fanciful way of religion, being apt in the exercise thereof (if not curbed by a law) to dote upon sensible representations. . . . This the experience of men's wild eagerness for images, reliques, and other such foolish trinkets, which had almost quite oppressed our religion (as in many ages the best and wisest men did observe and complain) doth plainly evince."—BARROW, Works, vi. 491.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

Exod. xx. 4.

IT was probably in this brief form that the second commandment was carved on those old tablets of the rocks of Sinai; and it would take us far too long were I to attempt, to-day, to deal also with the menace and the promise appended to it.* The subject is a very wide one, and I shall not be able to treat it fully; but, at least, I trust to be able to show you that this is a *real* commandment; that God did not address it to the Jews only; that it warns us against an inherent and dangerous impulse of our nature; that God meant it not to be plausibly explained away, but to be studied, and to be kept. It contains, like all the commandments, a great principle; the great principle that God can be sought and found, not by any outward form, but only by him that hath clean hands and a pure heart.

1. The first commandment bids us to worship the one God *exclusively*, the second bids us to worship Him *spiritually*. The first commandment forbids us to worship false gods; the second forbids us to wor-

* On this appendix to the commandment, see note at the end of the volume.

ship the true God under false forms.* Ahab broke the first commandment when he taught the people of Israel to worship Baalim instead of Jehovah. Jeroboam broke the second commandment when he persuaded them to worship Jehovah under the cherubic emblem of a calf.† But the two forms of sin are closely allied to each other. Jeroboam paved a broad path for Ahab. The identification of sensuousness with worship may easily become the first step to actual idolatry. Neither Aaron in the wilderness nor Jeroboam at Dan and Bethel pretended that their calves were more than emblems of—

> "Jehovah, thundering out of Zion, throned
> Between the cherubim." ‡

* Paley makes the erroneous and superficial remark that "the first and second commandments may be considered as one, inasmuch as they relate to one subject, or nearly so" (Sermon on Ex. xx. 5, Works, iii. 320). Barrow says truly: "The first commandment determined the final object of our religion; this doth limit the manner of exercising and expressing it" (Works, vi. 486).

† "Calf-worship," as Scripture calls it with just contempt, always claimed to be faithful to the first commandment. Aaron, when he set up the golden calf, and Jeroboam, when he set up his two, taught the people to regard them as cherubic symbols of Jehovah. See Ex. xxxii. 4, 5 (where Aaron says of the calf-feast, "to-morrow is a feast to Jehovah"), 1 Kings xii. 26–33. The prophets of Israel still call themselves prophets of Jehovah, 1 Kings xxii. 5–7, 12, 13.

‡ It was, however, considered admissible to use certain cherubic emblems—faces of the "fourfold-visaged four" (Ex. xxv. 18, xxvi. 31, etc.). Perhaps as an ox was the most prominent cherubic symbol (comp. Ezek. x. 14 with Ezek. i. 10), Solomon thought he might have his twelve oxen under the laver; but Josephus ("Antt." viii. 7, § 5) distinctly charges him with breaking the commandment, and this custom became morally and spiritually dangerous.

Yet God sent His wrath like fire among those apostatizing Israelites in the desert; His word brands the first king of Ephraim, in age after age, with the awful stigma of "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin."

2. What is the primary meaning of the second commandment? Did it forbid the arts of painting and sculpture? Probably to the Jews it did, as to this day it does for the Mohammedans, who adorn their mosques and palaces only with patterns and arabesques.* Among a nation of half-emancipated serfs, steeped in the recollections of idolatry, it was necessary to discourage the plastic arts. They needed the teaching not of painters and sculptors, but of prophets. Nevertheless, the literal force of the commandment lay in the words, "Thou shalt not make *unto thee*." † A graven image, made without the remotest danger of any sort of religious devotion ever being paid to it, is, therefore, no sin against even the letter of this commandment.‡

3. But why was it necessary to say to the Jews, amid the thunders of Sinai, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image"? And why is it still necessary to republish that commandment to Christians?

* Philo ("Quis Div. Rer. Haer." 35) says that Moses banished the designing arts (*ἐπίβουλοι τέχναι*) of painting and sculpture.

† *Λέγει ὁ Ζήνων, ὁ τῆς Στωϊκῆς κτίστης αἱρέσεως μήτε ναοὺς ποιεῖν μήτε ἀγάλματα οὐδὲν γὰρ εἶναι τῶν θεῶν ἄξιον κατασκεύασμα.* Clem. Alex. "Strom." v. p. 426; Aug. "Civ. Dei," iv. 31.

‡ Josephus rightly understood it to mean *κελεύω μηδένος εἰκόνα ζῴου ποιήσαντας προσκυνεῖν* ("Antt." iii. 5, § 5).

The answer to that question is—Because there is, in the human mind, a perilous tendency to worship idols, which needs to be incessantly resisted.* Israel was constantly starting aside into idolatry like a broken bow. Even in the wilderness they took up the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of their God Remphan, images which they had made to worship.† Even under the burning crags of Sinai they made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the graven image; and the rebel king "doubled that sin at Bethel and in Dan." The seven servitudes of the Book of Judges were the appropriate retribution for seven apostasies; and, in Judah also, king after king, from Solomon to Manasseh, followed after idols. When the crushing ruin of the Exile cured the Jews forever of material idolatry, they substituted for it the hardly less fatal idolatry of forms and ceremonies, and of the dead letter of the law. This new idolatry, though it passed itself off as the perfection of worship, was even more dangerous than the other. It plunged the nation into a deadlier iniquity. Baal-worshippers had murdered the prophets; Pharisees crucified the Lord of life.

4. Hence all Scripture rings with denunciations of idolatry. Its poets and prophets pursue every form of idol with a burning storm of irony and indigna-

* For a remarkable sketch of the origin of Pagan idolatry, see *Wisdom*, xiii.–xv. The writer says, "For the worshipping of idols not to be named is *the beginning, the cause, and the end of all evil.*"

† Acts vii. 43.

tion.* If idolatry were an extinct temptation, half of Scripture would only retain an historic interest. Alas! the temptation to idolatry, objective and subjective, open and secret, is still powerful. Men are too carnal, too sensuous, too inherently superstitious to be content with a pure, simple, spiritual religion. They always try to explain away the one fundamental message of Scripture, that religion means "a good mind and a good life." † It is so much easier to bow the head than to cleanse the heart; so much easier to multiply services than to be kind, and truthful, and humble. Hence the eternal Pharisaism which tempts them to teach that what God cares for is sacrifice, not mercy; fasting, not charity; orthodoxy, not goodness; instrumentals, not fundamentals; rites, ceremonies, genuflexions, shibboleths, scrupulosities of outward observance, not the being meek, and pure, and just. And so even St. John, writing exclusively to Christians, in the last verse of his great Epistle, which is probably the last word of New Testament revelation—the dying murmur, so to speak, on the lips of him whom Jesus loved—says, as his farewell to them and to the world, "*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*"

5. The tendency, then, to idolatry lies deep in the human spirit. This is why the one thing on which the books of Moses insists is, "Ye saw no manner of

* Is. xl. 18–27, xlii. 17, xliv. 9–20, xlvi. 5–7; Jer. x. 3–5; Hab. ii. 18; Ps. cxv. 3–8, etc.

† Whichcote, "Aphorisms."

similitude." We cannot have a visible God; or a God materialized under any outward form whatever; but the ignorant and sensuous multitudes insist on having one, and, in spite of the warning voice of all God's prophets, priests will give them one.

> "The man that went into the cloud
> Is gone, and vanished quite;
> 'He cometh not,' the people cries,
> 'Nor bringeth God to sight.'
> 'Lo! these thy gods that safety give;
> Adore and keep the feast,'
> Deluding, and deluded, cries
> The Prophet's brother-priest:
> And Israel all bows down to fall
> Before the gilded beast."

Do not we likewise! God is a spirit. God is righteous. God is light. God is love. God is with you, and shall be in you. The kingdom of Heaven is within you. God dwells unseen in the holy heart. He cannot be seen, or tasted, or held in the hollow of the hand.

6. This is God's teaching. We need not ascend into Heaven to bring down Christ from above, nor descend into the abyss to fetch Him thence; but the Word is very nigh us, even in our mouth and in our heart. We Christians have less excuse than all others for idolatry; and yet we neither have been nor are exempt from the old temptation. We can be nearer to God in Christ even than the Apostles were —even than St. John was when he laid his head upon His breast. But His presence is not a material, it is a spiritual presence.

He has promised, "If any man hear My voice, and will open the door, I will come in to him, and make My abode with him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." But this way does not content us. No, we must have images and pictures to adore. We must have sacrificing priests, elaborate systems, human mediators, and mechanical transmissions and crosses and crucifixes, and holy coats at Treves, and fancied epiphanies of the Virgin at Lourdes and La Salette.

We treacherously surrender into human hands—often into human hands base and feeble, intriguing and tyrannous—that royal priesthood wherewith God would fain crown and mitre every true man over himself.* Christian idolatry always ends in sacerdotalism and superstition, instead of in pure religion and undefiled. Against that outcome of idolatry, with its cruelty and immorality, the great Reformation of the sixteenth century, and its successor, the manly Puritanism, which expressed all that was most righteous in the heart of England, were a protest. Reformers and Puritans determined to stand fast in the freedom wherewith God had made them free, and not to be entangled again in the yoke of bondage. Their souls, taught of Heaven, determined to be crushed no longer "under a multitude of visible objects of worship," and under the weight of a priesthood, which, keeping them in ignorant servitude, bade them worship wafers and winking Madonnas. They believed

* Dante, "Purg." xxvii. 143.

that God was a jealous God, and flung all idols to the moles and to the bats. Were they doing otherwise than good Hezekiah did, when, because the children of Israel burned incense to it, he smashed to pieces the brazen serpent of the wilderness, and called it Nehushtan, a thing of brass? Priests and Churches had been saying:

"Lo, here is God, and there is God!"

The Puritan replied:

"Believe it not, oh, man;
In such vain sort to this or that
The ancient heathen ran.
Though old religion shake her head,
And say in bitter grief,
The day behold at first foretold
Of atheist unbelief,
Take better part, with manly heart,
Thine adult spirit can,
Receive it not, believe it not—
Believe it NOT, oh, man!"

7. My friends, the Jews were all the more forbidden to worship images of God, because they were taught to look for the *true* image of God, in Jesus Christ our Lord. Yet, when He came, they called it blasphemy to accept Him in place of the false images which their religious leaders had created. They crucified Him because He called God His Father. But we Christians have believed that claim. His life, His sinlessness, His resurrection, His ascension, the outpouring of His Spirit have proved it to be true. And are we, then, who hold this Catholic faith, to take

upon ourselves to assert that God has repealed this His most emphatic commandment, and that He has given men a right, which they had not before, to bring the Godhead under visible forms? Are we to thrust the Church and its ceremonies into the place of God, and, as though He were not with us and in us, to accept the assertion of priests that they are, in any sense whatever, His vicegerents? I say that by every image and picture which men have been induced to worship, by every virgin or saint whose intercession has been asserted as necessary, God's immediate presence among us has been dishonored. Every priest who has told men that they cannot get to God except through him and his forms and ceremonies denies Christ's revelation. For Christ revealed that the way to the Father has been opened by the Son alone; and that the Father, through the Spirit, is drawing all men to Himself. The advent of Christ, so far from abrogating this second commandment, has re-enacted it with tenfold emphasis.

8. And has Christendom kept it? I think that in two ways Christians have dangerously infringed on its prohibitions.

(i.) They have done so by actual material images. In many niches of this Abbey we see that the statues have been removed. Who did it? The Puritans. And why? Because lamps had been hung, and incense burnt, before those stone idols. Were they not right? The Romanists might say, we did not worship the images, but only the Virgin through

the images.* Well, but we say that Virgin-worship was idolatry of the creature, not worship of the Creator, who is God for evermore; and the excuse of not worshipping the image was exactly the same excuse which Aaron and Jeroboam made—nay, which even the heathen made,† and the Brahmins still make, and never once did God admit it as valid. The whole history of Christendom is a demonstration of the peril and ruin of putting anything in the place of God, or between our own souls and God. The material symbols soon come to be invested with an artificial sacredness, and men bow to things of wood and stone. The almost invariable result of the use of inferior means of producing religious excitement is to mistake the excitement for religion; to substitute it for righteousness; to base our religion upon the falsehood that the wooden or gilded thing or outward function of our idolatry is necessary to make God any nearer to us than before.

(ii.) The crucifix, for instance, though half-Romanized Protestants are now introducing it into our churches, is both a dangerous and an unwarrantable material symbol. In the first few centuries Christians shrank from representing Christ at all. In A.D. 402, the highly orthodox and universally respected St.

* Thomas Aquinas, 2^{a} 2^{ae}, qu. 81, art. 3.

† So Celsus says, *τις γὰρ εἰ μὴ παντῃ νήπιος ταῦτα ἡγεῖται τοὺς θεοὺς ἀλλὰ θεῶν ἀναθήματα καὶ ἀγάλματα.* (Ap. Orig. c. Cels. vii.) See Lact. "De Orig. Err." 22. Chrys. Hom. xviii. in "Ep. ad Eph." See on this subject Archbishop Tenison's "Sermon on Idolatry," and Archbishop Whateley's "Errors of Romanism."

Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, tore down a curtain in a church of Palestine because it had an image of Christ woven upon it. He declared that to have such a picture in a church was contrary to the Christian religion, and bade the priest use it for some pauper's shroud. With still more holy reserve did Christian piety shrink from representing the Lord of glory in the brief passing moment of His death; in the brief passing spasm of the hour and power of darkness. Even when Christians began to use the symbol of the cross they made it a joyous and not a morbid symbol. We are told in one of the recent Romanizing books of devotion, which now appear in shoals, to "keep a crucifix and adore every day the five precious wounds." St. Paul would have roughly characterized such adoration as an hysterical and degrading idolatry; and religion was never more corrupt in itself, nor more horrible in its iniquities against the bodies and souls of men, than in the days in which men most morbidly worshipped and sobbed over this material idol of physical agony.

Apart from manifold other objections, it has been truly said that "this prostration of the soul before the image of the dying Christ makes our worship and our prayer unreal. We are adoring a Christ who does not exist. He is not on the cross now, but on the throne. His agonies are past forever. He is at the right hand of God. If we pray to a dying Christ, we are praying not to Christ Himself, but to a mere remembrance of Him. The injury which the crucifix

has inflicted on the religious life of Christendom, in encouraging a morbid and unreal devotion, is absolutely incalculable." * In the days of primitive Christianity—and the difference in the religious results is infinite—the aspect in which the Lord of life was regarded was not that of an agonized sufferer, but as "the Incarnate Word, the Present Friend, the Prince of Peace on earth, the everlasting King in Heaven. What His life is, what His commandments are, what His judgments will be," these are the thoughts on which men dwelt; "not mainly what He once did, or what He once suffered, but what He is doing now, and what He requires us to do; and" (as a great moral teacher has truly said) "the fall from that faith, and all the corruptions of its abortive practice, may be summed up briefly as the habitual contemplation of Christ's death instead of His life, and the substitution of His past sufferings for our present duty." †

(iii.) But without sinking into these errors and idolatries, it is fatally possible for us to break the second commandment by making to ourselves a false *ideal* of Christ. The proper meaning of "idols" is that in which Lord Bacon uses it in the *Novum Organum: εἴδωλα*—false, fleeting, shadowy images; subjective phantoms; wilful illusions; cherished fallacies. There are idols of the race inherent in the soul of man, which, like an unequal mirror, mingles its own nature with that of the light which it distorts; idols of the cave, which lurk in the secret abyss of

* Dale. † Ruskin.

each man's heart, reared there by his temperament and training, and fed with the incense of his passions; idols of the market-place, false conceptions of God which spring from men's intercourse with one another and from the delusive glamour of words; idols of the school, false notions which come from the spirit of sect, and system, and party, and formal theology.*

Our idol of the market-place tells us that custom and convention are valid excuses for national crime and individual faithlessness. Our idol of the cavern whispers to us that God will make exceptions on our behalf, and that our sin is only "a soft and venial infirmity of the blood." Our idol of the school tells us that God is not a Spirit, but that He is confined to temples, only approachable through priests, bound up in books, fussy about trivialities of worship;—or that He is the awful Moloch-god of persecution, who loves the racks and thumbscrews and bale-fires of religious intolerance, until we feel inclined to say with Wesley to Whitefield, "Your God is my devil";—or that He is a God of infinite selfishness, caring only for His own glory, burning with implacable wrath against lit-

* It is a remarkable fact that, according to some, there is, in the actual words of the commandment, a warning against the peril of "thinking wickedly that God is even such an one as ourselves." For we are forbidden not only to make a graven image (*pesel*, εἴδωλον), but also a figure, form, or likeness (*t'moonāh*), of which, according to Maimonides, one meaning is "the form of a thing which the imagination keeps alive," and another "the characteristic quality of a thing as it is conceived by the mind," as in Num. xii. 8, where it means a conception of the imagination. (See Kalisch, *ad loc.*)

tle deviations of opinion, delighting in narrow formalism and bitter exclusiveness;—or that He is a God of arbitrary caprice, treating men as though they were mere dead clay to be dishonored at His will. All such idols are dashed to pieces by the ringing hammer-strokes of the truth that God is Light, and God is Love.*

And even the God-man, Christ Jesus, may be monstrously misrepresented to us in Art and in Theology. To Michael Angelo He was a wrathful avenging Hercules, hurling ten thousand thunders on the crushed, convulsed, demon-tortured, innumerable multitude for whom He died in vain.† To many of the Schoolmen His ideal was the self-absorption and squalid asceticism of the monkish cloister. Priests have offered us a dead Christ for the living Christ; an agonized Christ for the ascended Christ; an ecclesiastical Christ for the divine Christ; a sectarian Christ for the universal Christ; a petty, formalizing, Pharisaical Christ for the royal Lord of the great free heart of manhood; a Christ far off in the centuries instead of ever nigh at hand; a Christ of the exclusive fold for the Christ of the one great flock; a Christ of Gerizim, or of Jerusalem, or of Rome, or of Geneva,

* Our notions of God may be *innocently* false from our necessary human limitations. God does not condemn us for innocent errors, but for those which spring from our pride and evil passions.

† "There are those who worship instead of a living Christ their own wooden and stony forms of theology, and this will leave them just as hard, as narrow, as loveless as any other superstition."—WASHBURN.

or of Amsterdam, or of modern Oxford, for the Christ of the eternal heavens and of the universal world.

9. How then, in conclusion, are we to escape from these idols? When the Empress Constantia, in the fourth century, asked Eusebius, the most learned prelate of his day, to send her a likeness of Christ, he replied with hardly suppressed indignation, "What do you mean by a likeness of Christ? Not of course an image of Him as He unchangeably is; not of His human nature glorified. Such images are forbidden by the Mosaic law . . . that we may not seem like idolaters to carry about our God in an image. Since we confess that our Saviour is God and Lord, we prepare to see Him as God. And if you set value on images of the Saviour, what better artist can there be than the God-word Himself?" Thus he refers the Empress to the Gospels to learn what Christ really was. If you will search and read them for yourselves, with open eyes and souls cleansed from idols, you will see all that He was. You will see Him, stern indeed to the Pharisee and the hypocrite, and dwelling on the awful depth, grandeur, and searching keenness of the moral law, yet large-hearted, human, loving; tender to sorrow, with an infinite tenderness; merciful and compassionate, even to the guiltiest of His children who would come with tears to Him; releasing the demoniac, cleansing the leper, giving sight to the blind, feeding that hungry multitude which, the Pharisee said, knew not the Law, and was accursed; welcoming the outcast publican; suffering the penitent harlot to wash

His feet with her tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head. Yes, He was no haughty Pharisee; no weak and effeminate devotee; no sickly sentimentalist, imposing petty ordinances; no domineering priest inventing artificial sins; no self-torturing ascetic, no self-macerating monk—though in all of these aspects He has been represented. He came eating and drinking, and full of genial tolerance, and loving the games of the little ones, and beautifying with His presence and miracle the humble marriage-feast. He revealed God as the God of the lilies and the ravens, of the fallen sparrow and the lost sheep and the prodigal son; as the Father in Heaven, by whom the very hairs of our head are numbered. Seek for God in Christ, and in what the Spirit of Christ will, if you seek Him, reveal to your own inmost hearts, and you will be freed from the perils of idolatry. Would you see Him as He is? You cannot see Him through chinks of ceremonialism; or through the blind eyes of erring man; or by images graven with art and man's device; or in cunningly devised fables of artificial and perverted theology. Nay, but seek Him in His own word; seek Him in loving lives; seek Him in sincere hearts, washed clean from traditional misrepresentations; seek Him in the revelation of Himself, which He gives to all who, by walking in His ways, see His face, and have His name written on their foreheads; and so will you be able to keep that admonition of the last word of all the New Testament revelation, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

"Serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear."—HEB. xii. 28.

"I hold no commandment to be more permanent or more necessary for my nation and for me than this one."—MAURICE.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,* for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

EXOD. xx. 7.

IT is with a distinct object that I have spoken to you of the Ten Commandments. No words of mine could exaggerate their awful sanctions; and so far from holding it needless to insist on these elements of all morality, I think that nothing is more necessary for an age in which there is so much unreality; so brave a flaunting of broad and glossy leaves, so deplorable a fruitlessness beneath their show. Far from

* It might be rendered, "Thou shalt not bring, or lift up, the name of the Lord thy God to a vanity" (or to a lie [or into emptiness] comp. Lev. xix. 12). Josephus explains it—*ἐπὶ μηδένι φάυλῳ τὸν Θεὸν ὀμνύναι*, "Antt." iii. 4; and our Lord expresses it by: "Thou shalt not forswear thyself" (Matt. v. 33). Solemn oaths are enjoined in Ex. xxii. 8–11; Deut. vi. 13, x. 20: "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and swear by His name;" and are approved by the New Testament (Rom. i. 9; 2 Cor. i. 23; Heb. vi. 16); "An oath for confirmation is to men an end of all strife" [comp. 2 Chron. vi. 22, 23; Ps. lxiii. 11; 2 Chron. xv. 14; Nehem. x. 29; Josh. ix. 15; Judg. xxi. 1; 2 Sam. xxi. 17]. But light swearing easily leads to perjury, as the Greeks said—*προπετὴς ὅρκος πρόχειρος ἐπιορκία*. Philo explains it to mean that "it is most impious to call God to witness to a lie." The third commandment must be regarded as an immediate corollary to the first.

needing a more recondite teaching, I cannot but think that if our churchmanship and our theology would but purge itself of all arrogancy, malice, and bitterness, and revert to the simplest elements of the law of God, it would less resemble the sort of religion which persecuted the Apostles and killed the Christ. And let none of you, misled by phrases, think that because I take my theme from the Law, I am not therefore preaching the Gospel. I am preaching the law, not of carnal ordinances, but of Christian lives. To the most solemn question which the lips of man could formulate, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" the plain answer of Jesus was: "If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments."

1. The ordinary notion of this third commandment is that it forbids profanity and perjury; and therefore those who are guilty of neither think that it but little concerns them. But "the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword; and pierceth even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." Before I have ended, even the most self-satisfied of us may well tremble lest we, too, should stand within the judgment of this third commandment. For its violation is practical atheism.

(i.) It *does* forbid profanity; but I need not dwell upon that. The vice of swearing, which is the most gratuitous of all sins, has long been condemned by all

civilized society. It is a sin to which there is no temptation—not only sinful, but senseless. In the godlessness of the eighteenth century to garnish the conversation with brainless oaths was a universal custom.* It was the state of things described in Cowper's satiric lines:

> "A Persian, humble servant of the Sun,
> Who, though devout, yet bigotry had none,
> Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,
> With adjurations every word impress,

* Preaching in 1730, Dr. Ogden says: "And where is the mighty harm, it may be said, since it is all in sport? Sport! With whom? The Creator and Lord of the Universe? Is He a subject for sport? It might puzzle a philosopher to trace the love of swearing to its original principle. Is it a passion, or an appetite, or an instinct, or a work of art? a vice which men have invented for themselves without meaning or profit, and to which there is no imaginable temptation. Is it an honor to swear? There are indeed some, if we may judge by the self-complacency apparent in their air and manners, who fancy that this vice is an improvement of discourse. If it be an accomplishment, it is one which the meanest person may make himself master of." The practice of Boyle, who "never pronounced the name of God without an audible pause," was a protest against the common profanity. Robert Hall gives the true account of the origin of swearing: "It is difficult to account for a practice which gratifies no passion, and promotes no interest, unless we ascribe it to a certain vanity of appearing superior to religious fear. If there are hypocrites in religion there are also, strange as it may appear, hypocrites in impiety, men who make an ostentation of more irreligion than they possess. An ostentation of this nature, and the most irrational in the records of human folly, seems to lie at the root of profane swearing. It may not be improper to remind such as indulge in this practice, that they need not insult their Maker to show that they do not fear Him; that they may relinquish this vice without fear of being supposed to be devout; and that they may safely leave it to the other parts of their conduct to efface the smallest suspicion of their piety."

Supposed the man a bishop, or at least,
God's name so much upon his lips, a priest;
Bowed at the close with all his graceful airs,
And begged an interest in his frequent prayers."

But in these days swearing has become the sign not of a fine gentleman, but of the opposite. Is it not, however, a grievous reflection that a sin which was thought nothing of when it was only a sin against God, first fell into disrepute when it was condemned as a sin against etiquette? But profanity may be shown, and often is shown, in many other ways besides garnishing conversation with words of awful import. It may show itself in many sorts of jesting with holy things, in the general spirit of frivolous irreverence, and in scoffing at the book and at the servants of God.

(ii.) This commandment *does* also forbid perjury.* Not many, it may be hoped, are guilty of that tremendous crime. Oaths were adopted as a protection to the sacred cause of justice; and the man must indeed be callous who can appeal to the Almighty to gain credence for a lie. The heathen felt this as strongly as we can do. Few stories in the old Greek historian are more full of awe than that which tells how Glaucus, the son of Epicydes, having had a treasure entrusted to him, was tempted, when it was reclaimed, to swear that he had never received it.

* Lev. v. 1, vi. 5. The Rabbis divided guilty oaths into four classes: (i.) heedless; (ii.) superfluous; (iii.) perjured; (iv.) gainful.

But before being guilty of this perjured villainy, he consulted the oracle, and the oracle gave him this answer: First—as in the grim irony with which Micaiah, the son of Imlah, bade Ahab "go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king"—it said:

"Glaucus, son of Epicydes, for this moment it is more gainful thus—
To prevail by an oath, and embezzle the treasure;
Swear; for even men who keep their oaths have to die.
But—

(for the terrific "but" came after the ironic permission)

—there is a nameless child of perjury; it has no hands;
It has no feet; yet vehement it overtaketh, till, clutching thee,
It shall destroy all thy generation and all thy house;
And it is better hereafter with the race of him who keeps his oath."*

Terrified by the dread menace, Glaucus begged forgiveness of the god, hurried back to Sparta, and handed to the owners the treasure which he had been tempted to embezzle. It was too late! The guilty and shameful thought of his heart was not forgiven him. He had purposed to take in vain the divine name, and before the third generation his whole race had been rent up from Sparta, root and branch.

2. We, you will say, are not profane swearers, are not perjurers. Be it so. Yet has this commandment no meaning for you? Look at the words of it: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

* Herod. iii. 86.

With that foolish literalism which eats out the heart of true religion, the Jews took the "name" of God to mean the vocable by which He was called; and because they thought that the four Hebrew letters which spell the name Jehovah were more sacred than the other name of God, they pronounced the former word with the vowels of the latter, as though the thing to be reverenced were the mere breath of articulated air; and thus slavishly keeping the commandment in the letter, they broke it constantly in the spirit.* But, throughout the Bible, the name of God means what He is, His essential Being, which, if we do not know, we can know nothing concerning Him.† The "name" of God meant much more than the sound by which men spoke of Him. It meant God in His reality, in His immanence, in His eternity. Jacob is intensely anxious to know the name of the awful being with whom he wrestled in prayer on the banks of the Jabbok, and David speaks of the name of God as his stronghold and tower. The Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Hallowed be Thy name"; and in His last solemn discourse He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them, and I in them." In that name lay the essence of the Gospel. It was the name of the Fa-

* See Matt. v. 34–36.

† Deut. xxviii. 58: "This glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God." Psalm xx. 1: "The name of the God of Jacob defend thee." Comp. Ps. cxv. 1; Mic. iv. 5; Luke xxiv. 47; John i. 12.

ther, of whom every fatherhood in the Heaven and the earth is named.

(i.) "Thou shalt not," therefore, "take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." He is thy God; nothing can make Him otherwise. He is a besetting God; thou canst not escape from Him. He seeth thee: here, now, and always; in the darkness as clearly as in the light. No height of Heaven, no depth of Hell, can shelter thee from Him, nor canst thou escape Him with the wings of the morning into the uttermost parts of the sea. He is about thy bed and about thy path, and spieth out all thy ways. To take His name in vain—that is, to no purpose—is to trifle with His omnipotence. It is to treat His being as though it were not. Thou takest His name in vain when thou triest to forget or to ignore Him; to live without Him; and, more defiant than the very devils, to believe yet not to tremble. Thou art His. To Him thy allegiance, thy soul, thy body, thy very self is due; and if thou flingest off His allegiance, and sellest thy soul to do evil, and thy body to work all uncleanness with greediness, then, in the deadliest of all possible ways, thou takest His name in vain.

(ii.) And, if thou dost, the Lord "will not hold thee guiltless." Observe, there is no menace here. It is the calmly awful statement of an eternal fact. If by godlessness, by disobedience, by hypocrisy thou art taking God's name in vain, thou art responsible, thou art guilty. Being responsible thou must bear the consequences, whatever they shall be; being

guilty, how can He hold thee guiltless who sees through all shams, and is the God of truth?

3. In the parable of the Two Sons, Christ classes multitudes of God's children under two heads: the wilfully defiant, who, when bidden to labor in God's vineyard, say, "I will not"; and the smooth hypocrites who say, "I go, sir," but go not. Both of these take God's name in vain. The first treats His being with insolent indifference; the latter tries to deceive Him by substituting profession for practice—vain words and vain forms for that labor in His vineyard which He requires, and which is the purpose of our lives.

4. Are there none here of the first class? Is there, for instance, no young man here who thinks himself a fine fellow because he despises religion, and has flung away the restraints of the moral law? Is the number few of those who forsake the guide of their youth, and forget the covenant of their God; who, plunging into premature dissipation, corrupting and being corrupted, following the multitude to do evil, frequent the music-hall but not the church, are familiar with the betting-list but not with the Bible? They are not going to do anything so "slow" as to help in the service of the Church and the teaching of the poor.

"There is no God, the young man saith,
Or, truly, if there may be,
He surely did not mean a man
Should always be a baby."*

* Clough.

Alas! what an every-day sight is this defiance of the Almighty, this selling of the soul for the pottage-mess of unlawful and depraving lusts! What can we hope for any of these, but that God should smite them to the dust in justice that He may uplift them again with mercy; that He should bring these prodigals to the rags and famine, to the husks and swine, till they learn to cry for very misery, "I will arise and go to my Father"?

5. But the other class of sons—those who are always saying, "I go, sir," but go not—is in these days by far the larger. Is it of any use to preach on this commandment, or on anything else, if I do not reach your consciences? And can I do this if I use merely the vapid language of convention? What we want to learn, each one of us, is, Do I, though I call myself a Christian, take God's name in vain?

(i.) Alas! how many of us take it in vain in our worship, so that there is iniquity even in our holy things. The gathering of Christians together in the house of God, to pray to God, to praise Him, to hear His messages, should be a most solemn function. Our feelings when we assemble for this purpose should ever be, "Take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground"; and with Jacob we should say, "Surely God is in this place; this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven." There is something shocking in levity and vanity, in frivolous chatter, in the lounging somnolence born of over-eating and

over-drinking, in the conceited irreverence and unseemly demeanor, which too often pain us in scenes of Christian worship. How many are there of those present here to-day, whether of the boys of Westminster School, or of us the clergy, or of the choir, or of the general worshippers, who can feel in this, or in any service, that it has been freed from all lifelessness, all heavy drowsiness, all wandering or even all unholy thoughts? Yet all of us should remember—most of all those whose daily familiarity with worship may tend to breed carelessness—that God is in His holy temple, and that he who would rightly come before Him must have clean hands and a pure heart. Otherwise, even in our worship, we do but add sin to sin by taking God's holy name in vain.*

(ii.) But life itself is, to every true Christian, a worship and a service, and it is too sadly possible to make of life itself one long act of taking God's name in vain.

Take the great world of business, with which so many are, in one way or other, connected.

Is there a man who makes his money by gambling in securities; by first promoting, and then abandoning, ruinous speculations; by trading on the greed and gullibility of the foolish? Is there a man who makes money by the scant measures, the false weights, the false balances, the false advertisements,

* "God looks not at the oratory of your prayers, how elegant they be; nor at the geometry of your prayers, how long they be; nor at the arithmetic of your prayers, how many they be; but the sincerity of them He looks at."—BROOKS.

the spurious imitations, the forged brand-marks, the drugged drinks, the adulterated or shoddy goods, which are an abomination to the Lord? Is there a man who is engaged in accursed branches of trade, such as the sale of spirits to savages and drunkards; or who is the owner of low drink-shops, which to the wretched laborer are "gins and traps of moral ruin"; or who derives his income from foul tenements unfit for human habitation, and often let for immoral purposes; or who in any manner panders to the vice and aggravates the misery of mankind? Is there a man who sweats his workers, defrauds them of their just hire, and grinds the faces of the poor, excusing by custom, or by the ruthlessness of a heartless political economy, the tainted wealth wrung from treating human beings as though they were nothing more than chattels and implements of trade? Is there a man who has made tens of thousands of pounds by plausible astute bargains, palmed off, under the forms of honorable agreement, upon the unsophisticated ignorance of non-business men? Well, all such men spend their whole lives in taking God's name in vain; for they spend their whole lives in conditions which defy the fundamental laws of that Being whom they profess to serve.

6. But the third commandment is far more searching even than this. A man may be utterly respectable, a woman may be perfectly moral, yet both of them be guilty of this sin; and what one has called "the great slugs of commonplace and cant" may be

leaving ugly trails over all their lives. Take the Lord's picture of the Rich Man. Perhaps he might have said, with the young ruler, that he had kept all the commandments from his youth, and that, in being clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, he did no more than thousands do in the high places of the Church and of the world. Ay, but his condemnation lay in his selfish absorption in his own comforts and possessions; in his callous neglect of the sick saint at his gates. Take the Old Testament picture of loveless prosperity which almost made the Psalmist say, "Then have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed mine hands in innocency." "These," he says, "are they that prosper in the world, and have riches in possession. They have children at their desire and leave the rest of their substance unto their babes."

What harm, it may be said, is there in doing what millions do, and always have done? The harm was that it *ended* there. A life like this, infinitely common as it may be, is not what God requires. He creates man for nobler purposes than that he should wax fat and shine, and heap up his cankering gold and moth-corrupted riches. Rich or poor, there is no difference; the human being who renders no true and self-denying services to his fellow-men, whose objects in life are spanned by self's narrow and impure horizon, is a beast,—no more. Yes, and the woman too; and whether her love of pleasure takes the form of fashion, frivolity, and extravagance in the London season, or the coarse orgies of the gin-shop

and the dancing-halls, or the concentrated selfishness of decorous domesticity, the life which ignores God's essential requirement that we should "love our neighbor as ourself," is a life which He will not hold guiltless—a life which takes His name in vain. Nor does it matter if, in the worshipper or in the priest, the selfishness turns sour in the forms of party religionism. Not only is that religion no religion which, "loving its party more than the Church, goes on to love the Church more than God, and ends by loving itself more than all";—not only is that religion no religion which thinks to do God service by imposing its own petty tyrannies, usurpations, and human ordinances—hating and undermining, since it can no longer kill, the saints who refuse its yoke:—but that religion is no religion which does not blazon upon its portals, as an end far above all its opinions, organizations, and rituals, that "love is the fulfilling of the law." Ten million prayers, and forms, and sacraments, and orthodoxies, are but so much dust in the balance unless the man also is just, and kind, and fair, and keeps innocency, and does the thing that is right. Alas! even in the name of religion it is but too possible all our lives long to be taking God's name in vain. How many a soul is destined to learn hereafter

> "That all his earthly creed was not correct;
> That God is not the leader of a sect;"

and that one loving word, one fair judgment, one generous impulse would, in God's sight, have been worth the whole mass of acrid orthodoxies in which

he prided himself and hated his neighbor, taking conceit and self-satisfaction for holiness, and the snow of leprosy for the hue of health?*

7. Surely then, in conclusion, this is an intensely searching commandment. The Rabbis attach such importance to it that they say the whole world trembled when it was proclaimed.† If we examine it, every one of us may well be afraid lest we—not in any slight and venial manner, but most guiltily—take God's name in vain. We daily pray, as Christ taught us to pray, to our Father, that His name should be hallowed, His kingdom come, His will be done as in Heaven so on earth. If we are rather dishallowing His name, hindering the spread of His kingdom, regarding His will, not from the aspect of the angels, but from that of the world, the flesh, and the devil, are we not at once convicted of taking His name in vain? And even if we be not actively wicked, but only passively carnal and selfish, lifting no finger to

* "She deems thin blood white milk of innocence,
And fasting, findeth hope of recompense.
She tethers thought from flight in open air
To turn the treadmill of repeated prayer.
She slays each soft emotion Love hath given
To make burnt-offerings to the 'host of heaven';
And, seeing beggars serve His golden door,
Bows down and serves the Mammon of the poor.
Behold, her soul is small, and pinched, and thin,
Surely it shall find crannies and crawl in,
And, contrite, plead in Heaven's warmer glow,
'Lord, this my leprosy was white—like snow.'"

† Shebuoth, 39; Kalisch, "Exodus," p. 353.

advance God's kingdom, or promote obedience to His will, our most frequent prayer becomes a hollow mockery, and we take God's name in vain.

And if God ever hold us guilty of this sin, think not that it will make no difference to us! Ah! if we know that we are at peace with God, that is a blessedness which no dread calamity, or combination of calamities, not sickness, or care, or bereavement, or the world's sneer, or the Church's injustice, can take away; and if we feel, on the other hand, that we are guilty and unforgiven, that is a misery which not all riches or success, or the world's applause can compensate. Let us search ourselves with candles, and see whether, amid all our self-satisfaction, our own lives are not grievously falling short. Let us judge ourselves by the light of the Eternal, not by the delusive flicker of human judgments. If by profanity, falsity, malice, sloth, self-indulgence, lust, worldliness, greed, or merely nominal profession, we, in our whole lives, have hitherto been taking God's name in vain, let us seek forgiveness where it may be found; let us pray earnestly for grace to amend our sinful lives; let us grasp the proffered hand of Christ, our sinless Elder Brother in the great sinful family, and suffer Him to lead us, as weeping prodigals, to the Father, who will receive us graciously, who will forgive us freely. It is the only hope, the only meaning of our lives. For God has made us for Himself, and all our hearts will be troubled and restless till they find calm and rest in Him.*

* St. Augustine.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

"He says, I shall make a beginning of the eighth day (*i.e.*, Sunday), that is the beginning of another universe. Wherefore also we keep the eighth day for gladness, on which also Jesus rose from the dead."—BARNABAS, "Ep." 15.

"No longer observing Sabbaths, but fashioning their lives after the Lord's Day, on which our life also arose through Him."—IGNATIUS, "Ep. ad Magn." 9.

"A week filled up with selfishness, and the Sabbath stuffed full of religious exercises, will make a good Pharisee but a poor Christian. There are many persons who think Sunday is a sponge with which to wipe out the sins of the week. Now, God's altar stands from Sunday to Sunday, and the seventh day is no more for religion than any other. It is for rest. The whole seven are for religion, and one of them for rest."—H. W. BEECHER.

"The Puritans in 1661 complained that the Catechism said nothing about the fourth commandment in 'My Duty towards God.' The Bishops replied, 'It is not true that in that answer there is nothing which refers to the fourth commandment; for the last words of the answer do orderly relate to it.' It appears, therefore, that the Bishops understood the fourth commandment to mean that we should '*serve God truly all the days of our life.*'"—NORRIS.

[For the fullest view of the relations between the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday, see Archdeacon Hessey's "Bampton Lectures."]

Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.

EXOD. xx. 8.

THE Sabbath is Saturday, the seventh day of the week; it was to be kept holy by consecrating it to God. The commandment is twice found in the Pentateuch in the form "Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary." * In Deuteronomy, the annex to the commandment—the reason assigned for it—is not the same as in Exodus.† Here, the reason is the work and rest of God in creation, as a mysterious prototype of the rest and work of man.‡ There the Israelites are bidden to keep the day as a commemoration of God's deliverance of Israel out of Egypt; and as the blessed law of sympathy learnt by suffering—that thy man servant and thy maid servant, yes, and even thy cattle, may rest as well as thou. The spirit of the fourth commandment, like that of so many in the Mosaic revelation, was a spirit of mercy. The Sabbath is not forced on us as an irksome obligation, but granted to us as a precious boon.

1. My object in these sermons being practical, I shall barely touch on the questions involved in the

* Lev. xix. 30; xxvi. 2. † Deut. v. 15.

‡ "Does not the recurrence of movements point to an order and a completion?"—MAURICE.

history of the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday. The division of time into seven days seems to have been known to the Jews in the earliest times,* as it was to the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Peruvians, and other nations. It is so natural and so blessed a division, so consonant with the world's experience of what is best, that the Greeks readily abandoned for it their week of ten days, and the Romans their week of eight days; and when, in the godless audacity of the French Revolution, those who would fain have shaken themselves loose from every vestige of religion, tried to get rid of it, and to have a holiday only once in ten days, they were compelled, after an experience of only twelve years, to revert to the blessing and ordinance of God.

2. You will say we have nothing to do with this commandment at any rate. We do not keep the seventh day, but the first. Sunday does not commemorate the day of God's rest from creation or Israel's deliverance from Egypt, but of Christ's resurrection from the dead. I answer that the essence and principle of the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday are precisely identical.† Both emphasize the law of wholesome labor followed by holy rest. Both com-

* The septenary division of time was known, but the seventh day was not observed by the patriarchs as sacred.—Just. Mart. Dial., pp. 236, 281; Iren. c. Haer. iv. 30; Tert. c. Jud. ii. 4.

† "The primitive Church did not esteem the Lord's Day to be substituted in the place of the obliterated Sabbath (see Rom. xiv. 5; Col. ii. 17; Gal. iv. 10), but a feast celebrated by great reason and perpetual consent."—JEREMY TAYLOR.

memorate a great deliverance—the Jews were reminded of their exodus from the furnace of Egyptian bondage; we of our far greater deliverance from the curse of sin and death. "There are," it has been truly said, "three things to which man is born: labor, and sorrow, and joy. Each of these things has its baseness and its nobleness. There is base labor, and noble labor; there is base sorrow, and noble sorrow; there is base joy, and noble joy. But you must not think to avoid the corruption of these things by doing without the things themselves. Nor can any life be right that has not all three. Labor without sorrow is base; sorrow without labor is base; joy without labor is base." * Now you will observe that the fourth commandment is a twofold commandment of labor and of rest, and was also meant to give us joy in both. It says to us, "Oh, come let us sing unto the Lord, and heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation." There is nothing limited, nothing Judaic here. It is a command for the whole race of man. "Six days shalt thou labor;" but that the labor may not be degradingly and exhaustingly wearisome; that the man may not become a mere machine, "worn out by the dust of its own grinding"; that the thread of sorrow, which runs through all labor, may never wholly blacken into despair; that the thread of joy, thinly and rarely intertwined with it, may be brightened into spiritual intensity and permanence —therefore, "the seventh day is the Sabbath of the

* Ruskin, "Time and Tide," p. 24.

Lord thy God; in it thou shalt do no manner of work." *

3. Little need be said on the change from the seventh to the first day of the week. The first disciples kept both days: the Sabbath for rest, the Sunday for worship. The Christian Church made no formal, but a gradual and almost unconscious, transference of the one day to the other. She had been led by the Spirit, whose revelations are continuous, whose inspiration is permanent, to make her week a constant remembrance of her Lord. On Wednesday she recalled His betrayal; on Thursday, His ascension; on Friday, His crucifixion; on Sunday, His resurrection. She set the clock of time, as some one has said, to the epochs of His history. She meant her Sunday to be "a sort of Easter Day in every week"; and, "as the sunflower turns morning and evening to the sun," so the early

* "For the permanency of the Sabbath we might argue its place in the Decalogue, where it stands enshrined among the moralities of a rectitude that is immutable and everlasting; and we might argue the traditional homage and observancy, in which it has been held since the days of the Apostles; and we might argue the undoubted and experimental fact that where this day is best kept there also the other graces of Christianity are in most healthful exercise and preservation. But we rather waive for the present all these considerations, and would rest the perpetuity of the Sabbath law on this affirmation, that while it is a day of unmeaning drudgery to the formalist, it is to every real Christian a day of holy and heavenly delight; that, wherever there is a true principle of religion, the consecration of the Sabbath is felt, not as a bondage, but is felt to be the very beatitude of the soul; and that, therefore, the keeping of it is the direct and genuine fruit of a spiritual impulse on the best affections of the inner man."—Dr. CHALMERS, "On the Christianity of the Sabbath."

Church turned forever to the Sun of Righteousness, who had risen upon her with healing in His wings. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.* We may be perfectly at our ease about a change in which we follow the authority of every branch of Christ's universal Church.

4. But whether we keep the Sabbath or Sunday, the fourth commandment, in its eternal and moral aspect, bids us to keep one day in the seven holy. And how are we to keep it holy?

(i.) Let us look first at the Old Testament. Search it through and through, and you will find two rules, and two only, of Sabbath observance—rest and gladness. "In it thou shalt do no manner of work." * "This is the day that the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." Search the New Testament through and through, and you will find that the Jews had so completely misunderstood and overlaid the meaning of the day, that, with them, it had become a stupid and meaningless fetish, instead of a priceless boon. They had done what it is the invariable tendency of ecclesiasticism and spurious religion to do. They had split up the one main rule into hundreds of petty scrupulosities, and their priests and

* That "rest" was the primary conception of Sabbath observances may be seen in the following passages: Ex. xvi. 22–30, xxiii. 12, xxxi. 13–17, xxxiv. 21, xxxv. 1–3; Lev. xxiii. 3; Deut. v. 15, xvi. 8. The rest was to be from field work, vine-dressing, bearing burdens, buying and selling, gathering wood (Num. xv. 32–36), and kindling fires (Ex. xxxv. 3; Jer. xviii. 21; Amos viii. 5). See further Neh. xiii. 15–22; Is. lvi. 2, 6, 7, lviii. 13, 14; Jer. xvii. 21–27; Ezek. xx. 12, 20. Compare the use of the word *σαββατισμὸς* in Heb. iv. 9.

Pharisees delighted to lay heavy burdens on the necks of the people which involved no principle, or a false one. They did not, indeed, fall into the fatal error of the Puritans, and turn the glad day of rest into a gloomy day of inanition, in which it became a sin to take a walk or to pluck a flower; but they emptied it of spiritual significance to fill it with vapid ceremonialism. It was given for freedom, they changed it into bondage. It was not only hallowed, but blessed; they at once dishallowed it and reversed its blessing by turning joyous obedience into slavish eye-service. It was meant to be spiritual, they made it, as Calvin says, "vain and carnal." Seven times over our Lord had to repudiate their small orthodoxies, and break their wretched idol to pieces. They were always holding up their hands, and turning up their eyes, in pious horror at what they called His lax notions of the Sabbath. Look at Thy disciples! they are actually rubbing corn in their hands on the Sabbath-day. They watched, they denounced, they slandered, they dogged Him to death, because on the Sabbath He healed the sick, and bade the impotent cripple take up his bed and walk. But in all He did He meant to teach us the true principle of the Sabbath: that God cares for noble purposes, not for paltry details; that mercy is better than sacrifice; that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath"; that "all ritual and positive ordinances of religion must be for the sake of the worshipper, not the worshipper for the sake of them." But Christ laid down no single rule

for Sabbath observance Himself. He did not care for small details.* He came not to elaborate systems, but to reveal God's name unto the world; to live and die for the forgiveness of our sins, and the salvation of our souls.

5. The Christian Sunday, then, like the Jewish Sabbath, is, primarily, God's gift to us of rest and joy. We need both.† Blessed indeed is work—but blessed, too, is rest when work is done. God did not mean us to be drudges, and to spend all our lives in grim, sordid, worldly toil. The very animals need rest. The horse that is suffered to rest one day in seven will be stronger, healthier, and longer serviceable than one that is worked every day. The man who labors seven days a week instead of six will pay the penalty in peevishness and enfeeblement; he will break down sooner and enjoy life less. The tradesman who opens his shop seven days in the week will neither be so prosperous nor so happy as he who closes his shop on Sundays. Many a brain-worker has sunk into a premature grave, or died wretchedly by his own hands, because he despised God's law of rest. And oh, do not let the working classes be deceived! We desire, not to impose the Sunday on them as a yoke, but to preserve it for them as a heritage. Of all men who need it, they need it most.‡

* The only New Testament rubric about Sunday is that which sets it apart for almsgiving (1 Cor. xvi. 1–3).

† "Ratio immutabilis facit præceptum immutabile."

‡ This is strongly maintained even by the socialist, Proudhon.

It is more precious to them than the Magna Charta of Runnymede. If it were not protected for them by religious sanctions it would vanish, and they would soon be at the mercy of the meanest and greediest of employers, of the meanest and greediest of their own body. They who, among the Jews, were always murmuring, "When will the Sabbath be gone, that we may buy and sell?" were men who, for their own gain, wanted to wring out of their bondsmen seven days' toil instead of six, and were ready to buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes. God knew that the Jewish laborer, ploughman, shepherd, and vine-dresser needed rest. And when the back ached, and the sweat stood thick upon the brow, and the limbs were weary, many a poor Jew learnt to rejoice that there was a day of rest. But our working classes—in these great cities, among huge furnaces, under the pall of lurid smoke, deafened by the ever-whirling wheels of machinery, devoid of the sweet refreshments of labor in the pure air and the sunny fields—need the day of rest far more even than the Jews. If they be wise, they will be jealous for themselves lest the day be insidiously severed from its hallowed associations, and a bane be thrust on them under the specious semblance of a boon. He who turns the day of rest into a common day, and so profanes it, does not only violate a law of God: in despising the commandment of his Creator he breaks down a safeguard of his own beatitude. He wrongs not himself only, but like a bad son wastes the inherit-

ance of his brothers and sisters also. He shows that he cares neither for his Father's wishes, nor for the needs of all his other brethren in the great family of God.

6. But, if we are agreed that the Sunday is to be a day of rest, it is still most essential for us to understand that it must be a holy not an ignoble rest. There are many false ways of keeping Sunday. Let not ours be the Puritanic Sunday of gloomy strictness, for God meant us to be glad sons, not groaning slaves; nor the Parisian Sunday of frivolous pleasure-seeking, for we are children of immortality, not butterflies of a summer season; nor yet the Pharisaical Sunday of petty rules and restrictions, for God bids us stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has made us free. He who has felt that the consecration of the Sabbath is not a bondage, but a beatitude, will hardly worry himself with little shivering scrupulosities and abject alarms, asking, May I do this? ought I not to do that? Follow your own consciences honestly, that will be enough. We ought, as Thucydides said, to consider that a festival consists only in doing that which is fitting thereto, and that sluggish inaction is a worse thing than toilsome occupation.* Bishop Neale was asked, in the reign of James I., whether ladies might on Sundays employ their hands in knotting—something like what we call netting: he deigned to give no other reply than "they may (*k*)*not*"; purposely leaving the answer ambiguous,

* Thucyd. i. 70.

as the only reply which a petty question deserved. And Bishop Hacket, the biographer of Lord Keeper Williams, was contented with the wise, beautiful, manly rule, "Serve God and be cheerful."

7. Yet, if you ask for further principles—principles, rather than details—I would offer you four very plain and certain ones, which, I think, include everything: three negative and one positive.

Negatively, let not your Sunday be slothful. Let not your Sunday be frivolous. Let not your Sunday be selfish.

Positively, let your Sunday be spiritual.

Negatively,

(i.) Let not your Sunday rest be slothful, not a day of languid bodily ease, relaxation, and luxury, as it became to the Pharisees and later Jews.* A somnolent, sluggish Sunday—the heaviness induced by fulsome indulgence of the appetite—the plethoric rest of

"Men full of meat, whom most God's heart abhors,"

is fit only for the lowest animals, not for men.† If Sunday only means to many a heavier sleep and a more gluttonous dinner than usual, it is not only wasted but degraded. It becomes less holy, and

* Aug. in Ps. xci.

† Bishop Andrewes calls this *Sabbatum bovum et asinorum*. Bishop Hopkins (Works, i. 343) says with some energy: "And how many such carelessly profane are in these parts the thinness of our congregations doth too evidently declare. If we could now go from house to house, should we not find the greater part of the inhabitants idly lolling at home? who, after they had snorted out the forenoon in their beds, and thereby perhaps digested their last night's drunkenness,

more deleterious, than even continuous labor—clogging instead of expanding the wings of the soul, strengthening instead of helping to subdue the lowest passions of the body.

(ii.) Next, let not our Sunday rest be merely frivolous.

A book has just appeared, written by one who ought to know, professing to describe the way of life among certain fine ladies and gentlemen in what is called "society." It alludes to a possible visit to church, as a sort of civil thing to do. Of that I think little; for to go to church for any purpose but really to pray, and heartily to praise, and sincerely to humble ourselves before God, is an insulting inanity—as if one offered swine's flesh upon the altar. But the main elements of the aristocratic Sunday in the country-house as here described, are "the lazy lounge on the lawn, with favorite book or thrilling newspaper in hand, lying in the deep, low chair, stuffed full of luxurious cushions: the stroll round the stables in the afternoon, with an hour or two of equine talk; then the lawn-tennis, refreshing yourself out of a silver tankard filled with iced cider; and the evening quietly whiled away with music, and a cheery game

spend the afternoon in their chapel—the chimney—either with vain diet or intemperate cups, and sacrifice to their god their belly, while they should be worshipping the great God of Heaven. But if it prove a wet or burning day, these tender people, whom neither rain nor cold can prejudice at a fair or market, dare not stir out of their doors, nor step over their own threshold into God's, lest they should hazard their healths instead of gaining their salvation."

of pool in the billiard-room"; so that, according to this book—and oh, with what irony, conscious or unconscious, are we shown the Nemesis of hollow and languid satiety!—Sunday in the country ("unless it rains, which means an enormous consumption of cigars, and a headache") is "not such a very weary day"! The book then goes on to speak of Sunday in town, with its luncheons, and cigarettes, and dinner-parties, and excursions on the river, or to waterside hotels.* I do not belong to this "society," and I sincerely trust that this deplorable picture of the mode in which it fritters away the day of God is confined only to a small number. Yet the neglect which the book assumes to exist of the sacred and necessary ordinances of Christian worship, is, I fear, but too common in all classes. In Liverpool, the result of a religious census taken very recently showed that out of a population of 600,000, an immense number did not attend the services of any religious denomination; and in the more educated classes, if novels be any indication of the drift of modern custom, as I suppose they are, I find in a recent novel no less than three Sundays described, and they are all spent in indolent pleasure, without a hint that any one of the characters, whether heroes or heroines, so much as thought of entering a place of worship. And if these be true typical descriptions of the day of God, I ask

* "The Gentlewoman in Society," by Lady Violet Greville, pp. 149–155. The description unintentionally recalls what St. Leo describes as the Sunday of *Vacantes chartis et comessationibus.*

you whether it was to grant opportunities for this worldly, vapid, and heartless sensualism that Sinai was dark with thunderclouds amidst its angel host? Is this the Sunday of the Lord Jesus; or is it the Sunday of Epicureanism run to dregs? Is it the Sunday of God's children and fellow-laborers, or of dreary worldlings in a decadent civilization? Is it the Sunday of Christian men and women—a delight, holy to the Lord, and honorable—or of creatures who have no duties to perform, no brethren to help, no souls to save? Or is it rather what St. Augustine calls a Sabbath of Satan, a Sabbath of the golden calf? How immeasurably nobler as well as immeasurably happier is the Sunday of such a man, for instance, as the late Lord Cairns, or the late Lord Hatherley: men who, even in the mighty pressure of legal business, kept their Sundays free from worldly toils; men who were not ashamed to be seen, humble, reverent, habitual worshippers in the assemblies of devout and penitent Christians; men who gave some of their Sunday leisure to make the world better and happier; men who recognized that if we are daily taught to pray, "Thy kingdom come," it is the duty of every Christian also to *work* for the coming of that kingdom. These were men who, in poor mission-rooms, were proud, and not ashamed, to tell their humblest fellow-men the good news of God; men who were proud, and not ashamed, to sit upon the humble benches of a Sunday-school, Sunday after Sunday, for forty years together, and to teach the

children of the poor. I will not ask which style of Sunday is the nobler—for the one is absolutely ignoble—but which is even the happier? Are not those worldlings like children who gather from the harvest fields only the flaccid and empoisoned poppies, dead as soon as gathered, and blistering the hands with their acrid juice? Are not the others like children who bring home the ripe and golden grain?

(iii.) Thirdly, let not our Sunday rest be purely selfish.

So many young men are among this great assembly that I would fain say a word to them. There are two youths. One has made a choice. As for him, he will, God helping him, try to be a Christian. He knows how hard it is to be a Christian. He knows that he is surrounded with the subtle temptations of the world; he knows the crafty malice of the devil; he knows that everywhere he carries with him, in his own fallen nature, the germs of many a strong assault of the flesh. He feels, therefore, that—do his best, strive his utmost—he will still, through the frailty of our mortal nature, be an unprofitable servant. But he knows also, that he who strives for the mastery will at last be crowned far off in the spiritual city. He has, I say, made his choice. He is Christ's soldier; and he must fight. He is Christ's sentinel; and he must watch. He is Christ's athlete; and he must endure hardship. He is Christ's husbandman; and he must labor in the vineyard. Eagerly, there-

fore, he avails himself of the Sunday, to take hold of the hope set before him. He will joyously, loyally, thankfully consecrate that day, not to his own petty amusements, but to God. He will do what good he can on that day, experiencing the fruitfulness of self-sacrifice, the gladness of self-denial; and he finds that in thus losing himself he trebly, nay, an hundred-fold, gains himself, since

> "The high desire that others may be blest
> Savors of Heaven."

Thus to him, the Sunday, its worship, its private prayers, its generous self-denials, its quiet, regular, early communions, are a bliss and a help worth worlds, and so he remembers the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. But there is another youth. He, too, has made his choice. He is not going to be one of your "saints" or "milksops," as the devil teaches him scornfully to designate those who will not sell their birthright for a mess of pottage. He is not going "to be tied to his mother's apron-string." He means to make the Sabbath-day unholy. He will spend it in sloth and dissipation; at the best he will go off on his bicycle, and you will find him lolling over a billiard-table, in an alehouse, or with a pipe in his mouth under a tree, with a sporting newspaper in his hand. Do you ask me which of those two will be the happier, the purer, the more blessed; which of the two will be the worthier citizen, the better man, the truer Christian? You need not ask me; you can give the answer to

yourselves. I say this only—that the waste and selfish desecration of the Sunday, and the flinging away of its golden opportunities, is, I believe, to thousands of youths, the first decisive step in the downhillward course of moral degeneracy and of spiritual death. Sunday stands for the young man at the parting of the ways, of which one leads to God, and one to perdition.

8. We come, then, to the positive principle. Let our Sunday rest be neither sensual, nor frivolous, nor selfish, but gladly spiritual: a day of Christian worship and Christian thought; a day not only to rest but to ennoble; a day to remind us who we are, and whither we go, and whence we come. "Hallow My Sabbaths," said the Lord, "and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that I am the Lord your God."

We are all the children of the Most Highest, but the spiritual life, with its divine aspirations and bright-winged hopes, is, it has been truly said, "not the one which we habitually lead. Beside and around us is the world, with its labors and cares, and pomps and vanities; before us is Virtue, is Duty, is Eternity. The Sabbath is a bridge thrown across life's troubled waters, over which we may pass to reach the opposite shore. For as the Sabbath calls on the worldly to give place to the spiritual, and to lay aside the cares and labors of earth for the repose and holiness of Heaven, so it is but a type of the eternal day, when the freed spirit, if it be true to itself and to God,

shall put on forever its robe of immortal holiness and joy." *

9. And here I might well end, but I should like for one moment more to tell you of two high blessings which a wise observance of the Lord's Day may constantly confer on us. I agree with Mr. John Bright, when that great orator said in the House of Commons that "the stability and character of our country, and the advancement of our race, depend very largely on the mode in which the day of rest, which seems to have been specially adapted to the needs of mankind, shall be used and observed." But this national stability and advancement depends on the individual blessing, and that is twofold.

(i.) First, it may be to us, as to the Israelites, a deliverance from base servitude. The souls of us all are liable to many agitations, regrets, envies, ambitions, bitter disappointments, ungovernable desires. These make the soul like one of those Kaffir huts which is so full of idols that the owner can scarce move in it. Among these ugly and multitudinous idols there can be no room for Christ. Sunday may be a constant help to prevent their accumulation and their dominance. It may save us from the fell tyranny of a worldly routine. What a tendency there is to absorb ourselves in some base impulse—such, for instance, as the heaping up of money by business! Sunday is "a check on that feverish and

* Mrs. H. Montefiore, "A Few Words to the Jews" (quoted by Kalisch, "Exodus," p. 361).

insane devotion to secular business which is one of the most serious perils to the moral life of our own country." * "He was born a man," said a French epitaph, "and died a grocer." In other words, he merged the sacredness of his manhood in the pursuits of his shop. His heart had been so ossified by the benumbing pursuits of his trade, that men had ceased to think of him as a man at all. How many a tradesman, how many a business man, how many a clerk, spending day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, at the same desk, over the same ledgers, at the same accounts, till the frame is bent and the brow wrinkled, runs the same risks! His soul is liable to be "subdued to what it works in, like the dyer's hand." The work itself may be right, necessary, honorable; but if the life ends with it, if the soul is absorbed in it, if the great heart and divine spirit of a man becomes dwarfed and dried up in feverish devotion to it, how mean and miserable is the total failure of the life, possibly in the midst of what it deems its success!

Now the weekly recurrent Sunday is the one thing which God designs "to keep us from being drawn into this great whirlpool of time and sense." It reminds us that, behind the clerk or the tradesman or the toiler stands the *man* who is something transcendently greater, the man made in God's image, the heir of immortality. And by helping us always to remain conscious of this high nobleness, and of the

*R. W. Dale.

imperial palace whence we came, Sunday lends its own eternal dignity even to the common routine. "He that brings much of the week with him into the Sabbath will have the sure Nemesis of taking little of the Sabbath back with him into the week." *

> "A servant with this clause
> Makes drudgery divine;
> Who sweeps a room as for thy laws
> Makes that and the action fine."

(ii.) Lastly, the ordinance of the Sunday is most precious, because it may snatch us again and again from the perils of temptation. How many of the world's most deadly sins might have been prevented, if, in the crisis of temptation, some friend could have stood by us; some hand touched us; some kind voice have whispered to us, "Beware!" Such a friend, such a voice, such a hand may Sunday be to us! By its silent, beautiful recurrence it may recall our thoughts from the evil purpose, our souls from the vain desire, our feet from the guilty path. It may be to us as a herald sent from Heaven to save this frail barque of our lives out of overwhelming billows. How often, at the best, does the anchor slip and drag! How often does the fierce wind drive us helplessly towards the iron shore! Amid these storms the day of God comes to remind us of Him who, if we seek Him, will be the pilot of our course, and guide us to the haven where we would be. Sun-

* C. B. Blenkin.

day recalls to us, when all else tends to make us forget, that we have an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast, not holding us to the treacherous and slimy deeps of earth, but passing upward, through the aërial ocean, behind the veil, and there mooring us to the everlasting Rock!

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right."—EPH. vi. 1.

"The affection of children to their parents is like that of men towards the gods."—ARISTOTLE ("Eth. Nic." viii. 14).

"Pure religion breathing household laws."—WORDSWORTH.

"'Honor thy parents' does not refer to fellow-men, but to vice-gerents of God. Therefore, as God is to be served both with honor and fear, His representatives are to be so too."—LUTHER.

"Our domestic transgressions involve a coldness and indifference to our duties as citizens; our home life is confused and darkened by our want of zeal for the well-being of the nation."—MAURICE.

Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

EXOD. xx. 12.

IF the Commandments were carved in "two pentads," as Philo says, on the tables of stone, it may be objected that then this fifth commandment—the law of reverence to parents—which is a duty to man, will stand with the first four commandments, which are duties to God. But it is the special dignity of this commandment that it *is* made a direct part of our

* The word "honor" involves reverence (Lev. xix. 32); obedience (Col. iii. 20); gratitude (1 Tim. v. 4); the following of advice (Prov. i. 8, xxiii. 22); and, of course, the exclusion of all the feelings and actions opposite to these (Deut. xxvii. 16; Ex. xxi. 15, 17) (BARROW). Under the head of this commandment, Bishop Andrewes speaks at very great length on all the reciprocal duties of inferiors and superiors, husbands and wives, masters and servants, teachers and learners, ministers and their flocks, magistrates, kings, benefactors (Minor Works, vi. 174–210). So, too, Bishop Hopkins (Works, i. 439–517). Both these writers devote to it a far larger space than to any of the other commandments, as also does Dr. Ogden (Works, ii. 113–183, 1780), who devotes five sermons to it.

It is not without significance that the words, "and thy mother," were added, seeing that, in many ancient nations, aged mothers were slain, and the mother was always subjected after her husband's death to the eldest son.

duty to God. Our parents are not merely our neighbors; they stand to us in a unique, in a divine, relation. All true authority is founded upon, is a delegation of, God's authority. More especially is this the case with that of parents. During our early years they are to us in the place of God. The word *pietas* meant originally the duty of men to God reflected in their duty towards their parents.* Hence you will see that the summary of the five commandments of the first table is *pietas*, our duty towards God; and of the second table is *probitas*, our duty towards our neighbor.

2. By this consecration of authority the fifth commandment applies to every one of us, whether our parents be living or dead. It is the sanctification of all social life.† It involves for each of us the enforcement of the truth that man is not meant to live alone, but in families and communities. It is the corrective of each man's insolent tendency to make himself, regardless of all others, the centre of the universe. The fifth commandment is the surest basis of all righteous government. Selfishness, the brutal predominance of individual appetites and interests—self-assertion, and the vulgar claim of every man against all his fellows of "I'm just as good as you,"—these are the disorganizing, the disruptive, the anarchic elements of society. They end in plunder and blood-

* The verbs εὐσεβεῖν and *colere* are applied both to God and to our parents (1 Tim. v. 4).

† Olshausen.

shed, houses shattered with dynamite, cities blazing with petroleum. But all the elements of noble progress, all the securities for peace and happiness, all the sum of

> "fair six thousand years'
> Traditions of civility,"

depend on man's frank and glad submission to those whom God's providence has set over him. On the west front of Amiens Cathedral, the symbol of defiant vulgarity, debased by its own self-exaltation, is that of a man snapping his fingers, with cockney impudence, in the face of his bishop. But on all these wider applications it is impossible now to dwell. I must speak only on the direct commandment—the filial duty which indicates that divine self-repression, not worldly self-assertion, is the principle of all worthy life.

3. "Honor thy father and thy mother." We are bidden to *honor*, because love is instinctive, and can only be spontaneous. The honor for our parents is love combined with reverence; the love must be honor touched with emotion. The word "honor" includes "love," for there can be no true honor without love. Of course the reciprocal duty is implied. If the commandment only says to every child, "Honor thy father and thy mother," it means, no less distinctly, "And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." Into that side of duty there is less need to enter, because the love of parents to

their children is far more intense and permanent than that of children to their parents. But the obliteration of this instinct, on either side, is one of the worst signs, on the one hand, of savage dehumanization, and, on the other, of civilized degeneracy. St. Paul's picture of Pagan depravity, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, culminates in the charge that men had become "insolent, haughty, boastful, disobedient to parents, without natural affection."

4. Filial affection, however, though instinctive, may be deepened by education. The Jews, from whose wisdom we may learn so much, insisted upon it with intense earnestness. It lay at the basis of the old sweet patriarchal life. The Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are full of exhortations to it, and stern denunciations of its neglect. In Jewish history, Joseph, the beautiful and pure, was set up as the example of filial love as well as of youthful chastity. On the other hand, such was the execration for the memory of Absalom, the beautiful and bad, that to this day each Jewish child, as he passes by his traditional tomb in the valley of Jehoshaphat, is taught to spit at it, and hurl a contumelious stone at the resting-place of the rebellious son.

5. The moral *canaille* of the world care nothing for their parents, but only for themselves. But the deepest feelings of the best men have been mingled with their love to their parents. The sacredness, or the shipwreck, of this love has furnished to literature some of its most impassioned themes. Recall Cowper's

lines on the receipt of his mother's picture, written fifty years after her death:

> "Oh, that those lips had language! Life has passed
> With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
> Those lips are thine; thy own sweet smile I see,
> The same that oft in childhood solaced me.
>
> * * * * *
>
> My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
> Say wast thou conscious of the tears I shed;
> Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
> Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?"

And, for the other side of the picture, recall the most overwhelming of all Shakespeare's tragedies. The tragedy of "King Lear" turns mainly on the foul ingratitude of Goneril and Regan, in contrast with the speechless, yearning love of Cordelia, faithful to the death. It is filial untenderness which wrings from the old, dazed, heart-broken, tempest-beaten king the agonizing cry—

> "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
> To have a thankless child!"

6. Nor is it otherwise in History. Many of the most pathetic scenes in the records of human life turn on parental and filial affection. In the Bible, think of Aaron's stricken silence when his two first-born, Nadab and Abihu, died by the fire of God, "and Aaron held his peace." Think of Jacob's wail over his lost Joseph: "I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning." Think of the hero David's outburst of

weeping over that twice-dead youth, when, with a voice choked with anguish, he sobbed forth: "Oh, my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

In Grecian history think of Pericles, placing the wreath on the brow of his dead boy, turning aside to hide his face, the strong heart broken at last, which, in all the calamities of war and pestilence, and the murmurs of his people, had continued unsubdued. Think of Titus, so moved by the false accusation of intriguing against his father, the Emperor Vespasian, that he hurried back from Jerusalem with headlong speed, and, bursting into his father's presence, cried out with tears, *Veni, pater, veni*—"I have come, my father, I have come!" Think of our proud Norman king, Henry I.:

> "Before him passed the young and fair
> In pleasure's reckless train;
> But seas dashed o'er his son's bright hair—
> He never smiled again;"

or of Henry II., stricken with passionate despair, when, among the signatures of his other rebellious children, he saw the name of his youngest and best loved, John; Or of the great Frederic Barbarossa crying out bitterly at his son's death: "I am not the first who has suffered from disobedient sons, and yet has wept over their graves." Think of the wretched Henry IV. of Germany, treacherously ar-

rested and deposed by his own son, falling on his knees before him with a cry: "Oh, do not sully thy honor and thy name! No law of God obliges a son to be the instrument of divine vengeance against a father."

Again, how often has the thought of a mother been present at the closing moments of life. When the young and gallant boy, Conradin of Hohenstauffen, the last of his race, was dragged by his enemies to the scaffold, undaunted to the last he flung his gage of defiance among the multitude assembled to witness his execution, but murmured, as he bowed his fair face over the block, "Oh, my mother, how deep will be thy sorrow at the news of this day!"—and when Sir John Moore lay dying on that disastrous field at Corunna, the name of his mother was the last upon his lips. The truest men have never blushed to give the most public proof of this filial devotion. No record of the late President Garfield, of the United States, won him warmer sympathy than the manly kiss which he gave to his aged mother before the assembled multitude on the day of his supreme triumph.

7. I will but glance at a difficulty, which perhaps may touch one or two in this great multitude. They may be so unhappy as to have unworthy parents; parents who have wronged their families, and dragged them down by vice and shame. Are we, they may ask, to honor those who are dishonorable, to reverence those to whom no reverence is due? I answer that we must not be like the Jewish ecclesiastics whom

Christ so sternly rebuked for teaching their votaries to say to their fathers and mothers, "It is Corban, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me." Our parents have loved us, their children, in spite of all our commonness, our unlovableness, our waywardness, our indifference. Are the children to show no forbearance to the sins of their parents? Alas for earth, if unworthiness is to sever the bonds of love and duty! Scripture gives us a very early and terrible warning on this head. When Noah lay in shame in his tent, his son and his grandson earned an undying curse by their callous mockery, which shocked the moral sense even of that rude world; but Shem and Japhet earned an undying blessing for the reverent faithfulness which covered the sin of their father.

Oh! by all the tender memories, by all the sweet sanctities, by all the holy sorcery of home, let us never forget that in our families, everywhere and always, we must bear one another's burdens; that the sin or the vices of one is and must be the shame and agony of all. We are members one of another. The bonds of nature, which unite us to every member of our families, are indissoluble bonds. I knew a mother once whose boy was convicted of stealing at school. She lived on the outskirts of a town; and so deeply did her boy's shame weigh on her, that for years afterwards, never even in the twilight did she enter the streets of the town by which she lived. I knew a son once—he was a dignitary of the Church of England—whose father, also a man in high place, had dis-

graced himself by a dark and evil deed. By that deed he forfeited all. His career was ended forever, his sun set in obscure darkness while it yet was day. The world, which, being so wicked and criminal itself, is ever the most remorselessly cruel to discovered crime, utterly forsook the poor guilty man. He never showed his face again anywhere. But his virtuous son did not forsake him. He shared that awful burden. He took his poor, shamed, disgraced, ruined father into his house until he died. For his sake he gave up all that makes life most sweet. For his sake he remained unmarried. It was a noble example of self-sacrifice, all the more because it was known to so few. But that good son received conspicuously the blessing of God for his filial faithfulness; and I am well sure that now, in that far land where all is judged of truly, he has received his hundredfold reward.

8. St. Paul calls the fifth commandment "the first commandment with promise";—at that promise I must now glance. "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." It showed infinite misapprehension when Heylin, the biographer of Archbishop Laud, remarked, "How can the honor which we pay to parents have anything to do with this command, seeing that a promise is appended to it which points only to Palestine?" It was the old error that God was giving local rules to the Jews, not eternal principles of morality for all mankind. But perhaps you will rather be staggered with a doubt

whether the promise holds true.* Good sons, alas! die, cut off in the flower of their youth,—sons who have dearly loved their parents, and truly honored them.

"O father, whereso'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son;
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath stilled the life that beat from thee.

"O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor—while thy head is bow'd
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave."

Yes, but their death may be, in God's sight, their reward, the longer days in a better land.† And though we often see a beautiful truth in the proverb that "whom the gods love die young,"‡ yet, as a rule, the promise literally holds good, both to nations and to individuals. It is no mere bribe of eudæmonism, no plea to make us good by the poor appeal to utilitarian instincts. It is simply the expression of an universal experience, and of a natural law.

(i.) Individually even, the boy who loves and honors his parents will, as a rule, be more prosperous, be in all respects more happy, be more blessed than the bad son. Long before Moses, an Egyptian sage had written that "the son who attends to the words of his father will grow old in consequence."§ It is so in the nature of things. A distinguished officer in

* Eccl. ix. 2, 3: "All things in this world are alike to all men."

† 2 Kings xxii. 20. ‡ See 1 Kings xiv. 13.

§ Lenormant, "Hist. Anc." i. 342 (quoted by Canon Rawlinson, "On Exodus").

the army told me that his experience, in a long life, had been exactly the same as that of an old admiral, who said that of all the midshipmen who had passed under his rule he had never known one fail to turn out well who wrote weekly his loving letters to his home. It is the prodigals, not the good sons, who bring down upon themselves a curse. "Show me a boy who loves his mother," says a recent writer, "and I will show you one who will make a faithful friend, a noble lover, a tender husband. Show me one to whom home-love has no attraction, because it is 'too slow,' and I will tell you never to trust that man with anything which constitutes the happiness of others." You remember the high blessing which the prophet pronounced on the children of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, because they had obeyed their father's commandment. A young boy was once going to sea as a midshipman, but as he got into the boat he saw his mother's streaming tears. "Fetch back my trunk," he said, "I will not go, and break my mother's heart!" "George," said his mother, "God has promised to bless the children who honor their parents, and I believe that He will bless you." That boy grew up to be George Washington, first President of the United States of America.

"And moving up from high to higher,
Became, on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire." *

* Mr. Buckle gave the remarkable testimony that though no argu-

(ii.) But the main intention of the promise was national, and all history has confirmed its national fulfilment. "The corner-stone of the commonwealth," it has been said, "is the hearth-stone." The nation which produces bad sons will assuredly not have good citizens. Loveless homes very soon produce disorganized societies and decadent nations. Take but two ancient people by way of illustration. Why was one Spartan worth ten other Greeks in a battle? It was because Spartan boys were trained in parental obedience. When the Spartan mother gave her boy his shield with the words, Ἢ τάν, ἢ ἐπὶ τάν, "Bring back this, or come back upon it!" her word made him invincible. When the Spartan boy complained that his sword was too short, and the mother said, "Then add a step to it," she armed him in triple steel. Obedient sons make unflinching patriots; and it was because honor to parents means honor to our country's cause, that those three hundred Spartans stood against the vast hosts of Persia at Thermopylæ, and Simonides wrote their epitaph:

> "Go, tell the Spartans, thou that passest by,
> That here, obedient to their laws, we lie."

Nor was it otherwise with Rome in her noblest days. The irresistible grandeur which arrayed her warriors to conquer was founded on the *patria potestas*,

ment for immortality had much weight with him, yet when he remembered his mother he could not disbelieve in it.

the paternal authority.* Coriolanus spared Rome for Volumnia's tears; and when Virgil wrote the great epic of the Republic he could find no two loftier epithets for his hero Æneas than *pater*, "father," and *pius*, "the filially faithful." Dryden, in the corrupt England of the Stuart Restoration, translated the Æneid, but could make nothing of these epithets. *Pater* becomes the meaningless "sire," and a "pious" hero, or one to whom the wish of his parents was a law, would have seemed supremely ludicrous to the dissolute weaklings of a godless age. But the promise of the fifth commandment holds true eternally, and when Greece and Rome began to breed up conceited, unruly sons, walking after their own hearts' lusts; when Greece produced vicious and perfumed dandies such as Aristophanes pictures in Pheidippides; when Rome produced jewelled debauchees like Otho, and a matricide like Nero—God, too, began to wipe out their glory as when one wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. Napoleon, when he was asked what was the great want of the French nation, replied, "Mothers!" So that you see this duty to parents is "the very firmament and band of commonwealths." †

9. And, this being so, the weakening of the bond between parents and children is always a dangerous

* "It may be shown, I think, that the family as held together by the *patria potestas* is the nidus out of which the entire law of Persons has germinated."—MAINE, "Ancient Law," p. 152.

† Jer. Taylor.

and evil symptom. Undoubtedly we in England need to be on our guard in this matter. Within living memory the respect, the honor, the obedience to the commands and wishes of parents, was deeper than now it is. In a past generation men would have been disgusted and shocked at the petulant, disrespectful demeanor now often shown to parents; at the vulgar disowning terms in which many youths habitually speak of their fathers. I have heard the story repeated almost with admiration how once a worthless undergraduate told his father that he really could not walk down the High Street with him unless he dressed more fashionably. Many fine young gentlemen, who are not worthy to tie the shoe-latchets of the fathers on whom they depend, almost seem to think it derogatory to use the grand old honored designation of "my father." For that term of respect and love, an ignoble conceit substitutes some vulgar or loveless nickname. There are fathers, in all classes, who have loved and cherished their children—tried to make them happy, toiled for them, surrounded them with every indulgence, given them the very best opportunities—whose children take all the love and self-denial as the merest matter of course, due to their own transcendent merits; and give nothing in return. The boy of the working classes, who is earning his own living at sixteen, often thinks it intolerable that his parents should have the slightest claim on him, even for help in their old age and distress. "Parental authority," says the most experienced of London

philanthropists, "appears to be at a discount among certain classes, and fathers have confessed to me their entire inability even to control children of seven years old." The tradesman's son, to whom the father has given an education such as he never had himself, is ashamed of a father because he drops his h's, or does not know all the conventions of etiquette. The daughter, whose smattering of shallow accomplishments has led her to mistake herself for a lady, looks down on her mother from the whole height of her inferiority as a person to whom she can leave the domestic drudgery, while she herself is reading sentimental romances, or murdering vapid music on a cheap piano.

"The new generation," says a wise preacher, "is intensely mistaken in always thinking itself much wiser than the old." Oh, I would urge upon you all more care in the fulfilment of this fifth commandment! Each of you is somebody's child; and, if all the world deservedly hate you, that somebody—your father or your mother—through good report and evil report will love you still. But you will not have that somebody always. "Oh, thou who hast yet a mother," said Richter, "thank God for it." And you, my younger hearers, boys of the choir, boys of the Westminster School, and others who are yet what the Greeks beautifully called *ἀμφιθαλεῖς*, "doubly endowed," "blooming on both sides"—that is, whose parents are both still living—do not, by ingratitude to them, embitter your future years with regrets that

must be forever unavailing. You are going home for your holidays; the blessed Christmas-time is at hand; oh, let those who love you feel the warmth of your answering affection! As yet the circle of your families is unbroken; as yet there are no vacant chairs beside the hearth; as yet the chill shadow has not glided into your home, and beckoned away the best beloved. But it cannot be always so. The days may come to you as to many, when Christmastide shall bring more tears than gladness.

To the living you can show forbearance, honor, tenderness; but it will be too late—too late—for kindness to the dead! Many have been burdened for long years by remorse for unthankfulness to parents. When King James IV. of Scotland was a boy he stood in arms against his father. All his manhood was one long bitter penance for that sin. In memory of it he wore under his robes an iron belt, and to that belt every year he added a new link, an ounce in weight, that his repentance might be heavier every year of his life. You have perhaps read of Dr. Johnson's penitence. Once, when he was staying with friends at Litchfield, they missed him, and he did not return till late in the evening. When he returned, he said to his hostess, "Madam, fifty years ago I committed a breach of filial piety, which has ever since lain heavy on my mind. My father was a bookseller, and used to attend Uttoxeter Market, and open a stall for the sale of his books. One day, being ill, he asked me to go in his place. My pride pre-

vented me from doing my duty, and I refused. In memory of this disobedience I went to-day to Uttoxeter, and, going to the market at the time of high business, uncovered my head, and stood bare for an hour before the stall which my father had formerly used, exposed to the sneers of the standers-by and the inclemency of the weather. In contrition I stood, and I hope the penance was expiatory for this only instance, I believe, of contumacy to my father." * May not many who hear me have been habitually far worse than Dr. Johnson in their sin, who have not been like him in his repentance? Oh! may it never be your lot to cry with the poet to some dead father or mother:

> "Ah! would that I could see thee in thy heaven
> For one brief hour, and know I was forgiven
> For all the shame, and doubt, and rankling pain
> Which I have caused to make thee weep and sigh
> Bootless the wish! for where thou art on high
> Sin casts no shadow, sorrow casts no stain!"

God's prodigals—prodigals to that Heavenly Father to whom His only begotten Son on earth gave such awful and loving obedience—God's prodigals are we all! By seeking the aid of His Holy Spirit to obey His commandments we become more and more His true children, accepted in the Beloved. And this is one of the commandments: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Let all who

* In Boswell's Johnson the story is told to the Rev. H. White with some verbal differences.

have not been dutiful to earthly parents repent and amend; but oh, what deep need there is for every one of us to say to God, "I will arise, and go to my father, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

"It is sometimes stated as a disparagement to Christianity that 'Love thy neighbor as thyself' was a rule with which the world had long been familiar: thus we are told that the Greek Isocrates virtually anticipated the Christian Golden Rule, when he said, 'Do not to others what you would not suffer from them, and be towards others what you would wish I should be towards you.' Buddha (B.C. 550) said, 'Let a man overcome evil by good.' Many other of his precepts were remarkably in accord with the teachings of the then future Christ. Lao-Tze, the Chinese philosopher (B.C. 600), said, 'Recompense injury with kindness.' Confucius gave a similar precept."

The answer is twofold:—(i.) These high anticipations came from the Spirit of God—"the light that lighteth every man who cometh into the world." Christianity did not claim any *originality* on the score of its moral teaching. That is coeval with man's illuminated reason from the beginning of the world. What Christianity did was to bring morality into more close relation with, and dependence on, the source of divine life. These maxims of Buddha, Confucius, Lao-Tze, and Isocrates were beautiful sayings, and nothing more. They were uttered apart from the sanctions on which their strength depends. The second table would be of no avail without the first. (ii.) To bring moral truth into practice—to make it cogent upon the conscience of mankind—is something infinitely higher than originality. To utter a grand sentiment is little: to induce men to take it into the conduct of their lives is to be the greatest of the benefactors of mankind.

Thou shalt not kill.

Exod. xx. 13.

MORALITY, conduct, character, righteousness are the one end for which all religion is intended. Men quarrel about small ceremonies; they hate and would fain unchurch each other about questions of disputed doctrine or varying organization; but if a man, however orthodox or however churchly, be not righteous, and pure, and kind, all ceremonies, and all services, and all sacraments, and all doctrines are to that man no better than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.* I desire to bring home these commandments to your consciences, and to show that the recitation of them in our Communion Service is so far from being superfluous, that, still after three thousand five hundred years, and though in their first form they might be written on the palm of the hand, the word of God in them is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.

1. With the second table of the Decalogue begins

* "They that cry down moral honesty cry down that which is a great part of my religion, my duty towards God, and my duty towards man. What care I to see a man run after a sermon if he cozens and cheats as soon as he comes home? On the other side, morality must not be without religion; for, if so, it may change as I see convenience. Religion must govern it."—Selden.

our duty to our neighbor. The laws of probity follow the laws of piety, "that the river of justice may be derived from the fountain of love to God." *

2. The second table shows us the immense importance of social life. It surrounds with eternal safeguards the indefeasible rights of all mankind. It is meant to bring home to us the truth that none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. It leaves no room for cloistral absorption even in our own eternal interests. It assumes, as a simple matter of course, that our life will not be hedged in by a sweetly selfish aloofness from the common interests of the great brotherhood of man, but that it will be passed by us in the midst of the world, as just, honest, and kindly men among our kind.

3. Now every man's interests are identified with his person, his possessions, his reputation; and with these our duty to our neighbor is occupied. The sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments forbid wrong in deed to a man's life, and all that pertains to it. The ninth forbids wrong against him in word; the tenth would fain quench the volcanic source of all wrong. It would exorcise altogether the demon of selfishness, by driving it even from the thoughts of the turbid heart.

4. There are two doubts which man's rebellious will may oppose to these commandments.

(i.) The first touches duty itself. The man insolently asks, "Why ought I? What is duty?" With

* Greg. "Moral." xix. 23.

that question we may deal very roughly. Your duty is dictated by your conscience, which is the voice of God within you; the judgment of your own moral sense upon your own actions; the blushing, shamefast spirit which mutinies within you, when you do what is disgraceful or unfit. The conscience is the primæval vicegerent of God in the soul of every man who is a man at all. "It is a monarch in its peremptoriness, a prophet in its information, a priest in its anathemas and sanctions." And duty is "the stern daughter of this voice of God;" "the categorical imperative," as the great German thinker calls it; the sovereign power, "which, without insinuation, charm, or threat, holds up the naked law before the soul; which always inspires respect though it does not always command obedience, and before which all passions are dumb, however secretly they may rebel." This moral law within is majestic as the starry heavens above. It is the grandest thing in the world. Are you going to ask about it the hard rasping question of Shylock, the malignant Jewish usurer, "On what compulsion must I? Tell me that." The answer is that the compulsion is moral, and the obedience must be free. Duty disdains the submission of those to whom she comes only clad in her Gorgon terrors.*

If any man chooses, he may speculatively play with the ideas of conscience and of duty. He may describe

* The Pythagoreans gave the oldest, and, Dugald Stewart says, the best, definition of virtue as ἕξις τοῦ δέοντος, "the habit of doing what is binding" (Stewart, "Active and Moral Powers," ii. 446).

them as accidents of heredity, outgrowths of development, or agreements of utilitarian convention; but if he denies their supreme validity and sovereign obligations, he deserves the cart-rope rather than the argument, for his views would degrade men out of manhood altogether, and make them enemies of God and of each other—felons, or beasts, or fiends. Take from man the divine sanctions of duty and of conscience, and then

> "Dragons of the prime,
> That tare each other in their slime,
> Were mellow music, matched with him."

(ii.) But next comes the question, And who is my neighbor? It was the uneasy, perhaps half-insolent, question of the lawyer to Christ, when he wanted, at least, to soften the incidence, or limit the breadth, of this great second commandment, on which, with the first, as Christ said, "hang all the law and the prophets." In whatever disguise the question is concealed, it is always a phase of the hideous question of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The churl—the man who is but a living appetite, an incarnate selfishness—asks, "What is any one else to me?" "Take care of number one." "Every man for himself." "May I not do what I will with my own?" "Lazarus may lie at my gate, starving, full of sores, but why should that interfere with my equipages, my palace, my banquet, my purple and fine linen?" To which our Lord's answer is twofold. By way of warning, He told about the thundercrash of "Thou

fool, this night," which burst over the greed of the cruel niggard: and by way of instruction He spake the parable in which He picked out, as His type of divine compassion, a Samaritan—a man whom all Jews hated; whom they thrust, as though he were a leper, out of the pale of their Church. He told the Pharisees that the conduct of this outcast, of this dissenter, of this heretic, of this latitudinarian was to be their eternal model, because he treated as his neighbor the poor Jew, whom his own priest and Levite had left by the dusty roadside, to welter in his blood. It becomes clear, therefore, that by our neighbor we mean every fellow-man with whom our life in any way comes into contact, even our enemies. "It is not place, but pity, that makes our neighbor," says St. Augustine.* The breadth of this commandment is that "we hurt nobody by word nor deed; that we bear no malice nor hatred in our heart." And though, in some precepts, it was said to them of old time, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy," yet even the Mosaic law recognized our enemies as our neighbors. It bade men take back even to their enemy his straying ox or ass; it calls even our enemy our brother.† The true comment on the sixth commandment is St. Paul's pæan to charity in his Epistle to the Corinthians. It is the law of universal kindness.

* "Misericordia, non loci differentia, facit proximum" (Aug. "De Doctr. Christ." i. 30).

† Ex. xxiii. 4; Deut. xxii. 1.

5. Every man, then, in so far as he is a man at all, is to be loved: but you will say that the rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor *as thyself*," is, in any case, an unpractical or an impossible rule. It is true that "as thyself" means not "as much as" (*quantum*), but "in the same way as" (*sicut*). It does not define the degree, but indicates the manner. Nor does it, of course, exclude differences. Blood is thicker than water. We must love best our nearest and dearest; our brethren and companions; our fellow-countrymen; the good and worthy; the household of faith.* Still, to minds like ours, deadened by selfishness, and vulgarized by custom, it doubtless appears an Utopian rule. But God's saints have felt it to be the most natural thing in the world. "I could have wished my own self to be anathema from Christ," says St. Paul, "on behalf of my brethren." Smaller natures have been quite shocked by the expression. Yet Moses had cried long before, "Yet now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin—and if not blot me, I pray Thee, out of the book which Thou hast written." Danton, in the French Revolution, was not a Christian, yet even Danton could exclaim, "Que mon nom soit flétri, pourvu que la France soit libre!" And the mission preacher who revived religious life in England exclaimed, "Let George Whitefield perish, if God be glorified." "Do not expose your life," said a friend to the Duke of Wellington, as he charged

* Ps. cxxii. 8; Gal. vi. 10. "Alius alio propinquior," says Bishop Andrewes.

down the hill with his troops at Waterloo. "Never mind," said the Duke, "the battle's won, and my life's of no consequence now." Surely even we must, often enough, have had the feeling that we cared more for those we love than for ourselves? Surely we must sometimes have prayed with Enoch Arden, when those we loved most dearly were exposed to misfortune: "Save them from this, whatever comes to me." In truth, this care for others more than ourselves is the one distinguishing mark which separates the ignoble from the noble life. What is it which makes the life of frivolous godless women and debauched sottish men so inherently contemptible? It is their selfishness. They have shifted the centre of gravity of life from mankind to their own paltry greedy egotism; to whom applies the stern question of Carlyle, "Art thou a vulture then? and only carest to get for thyself so much carrion?"

Love to our neighbor has been the illumination of the world. It has kindled the scholar's lamp, and nerved the reformer's courage, and supported the statesman's strength, and enabled the lover of truth to live on amid the oppression of perpetual misrepresentation, amid corrupted Churches and an evil world. It is love to our neighbor which has purged the slum, and built the orphanage, and gathered the children into schools. It has had compassion on the poor; it has given bread to the hungry and covered the naked with a garment; it has given the Bible to the nations; it has launched the lifeboat to the perishing; it has

taken the prodigal by the right hand, and opened the door of repentance to the harlot and the thief. It was love to our neighbor, burning like a fire of God in the hearts of a Carey, a Livingstone, a Romilly, a Howard, a Clarkson, which sent missionaries to the heathen; modified the ferocity of penal laws; purified the prisons; set free the slaves. It was love to our neighbor which, enriching even an age of torpor and of Mammon-worship, sent Wesley to fan a flame amid the dying embers of religion; and Gordon to toil among his ragged boys; and Coleridge Patteson to die at Nukapu by the poisoned arrows of savages; and Father Damien to waste away at loathly Molokai, a leper among the lepers. It is a dim reflection of the love of Him who lived and died to redeem a guilty world. It differentiates the worldly life with its low aims from the noble and the Christian life, which is ready to do good to men that despitefully use it and persecute it. Every true life is nearest the life of Christ in love to its neighbor; and this love is the essence and epitome of all pure religion; it is the end of the commandment and the fulfilling of the law.

So far we have spoken in general of the second table of the Decalogue, and must now deal, though it can only be most imperfectly, with the commandment which heads it, "Thou shalt not kill."

6. The primary aim of the commandment is to inculcate reverence for human life. "Man is," or

rather man should be, "a sacred thing to man." * But for the tendency of selfishness which makes every bad man his own idol, each man's life would be thus sacred in each man's eyes. True Christianity always makes it so. The Romans would assemble by myriads in the amphitheatre to see strong youths hew each other to pieces for their amusement. In China, in Dahomey, in all savage and corrupted countries, human life is utterly cheap. In Christian countries it is infinitely precious. When the boat of poor George Ebers was caught and dashed to pieces on a rock above Niagara, tens of thousands assembled on the shore if possible to help him, and one universal sob shook the hearts of the whole mighty multitude, when that one poor unknown boy missed his leap, and was swept over the rushing fall. Only the lowest nations, only the basest or the most pernicious men, care not who perishes so their interest be sped. Was there ever in human story a more despicable picture than that of the prophet Jonah, wishing himself dead because of the wretched gourd, yet "exceedingly displeased and very angry," because—to save the man's miserable reputation—God did not destroy Nineveh with its 120,000 inhabitants? Was there ever a more wicked speech uttered than that of Napoleon I., when Prince Metternich told him that his plan would cost the lives of a hundred thousand men, and he haughtily replied, "A hundred thousand men? What is a hundred thousand men to me?"

* "Homo sacra res homini."—SENECA.

And Metternich, walking to the window, and flinging it open, exclaimed with indignation: "Sire! let all Europe hear that atrocious sentiment." Yet the Hebrew prophet and the modern conqueror were men, not monsters. They only show what gigantic proportions our selfishness can assume. The sixth commandment, taken as the Rabbis took it, and as it should be taken—in connection with the first—was meant as a check to this hateful egotism. The two together make man sacred because he was created in the image of God.* The germ of all righteousness, of all social virtues, lies in this truth. He who holds it fast will see in every fellow-man, however humble, a representative of his God, and so all his acts of daily intercourse will assume a hallowed character.† The sixth commandment establishes the brotherhood of man upon the fatherhood of God.

(i.) Primarily it forbids the wanton taking of human life. I shall not speak, for there is no time, of its collateral issues. War has often turned the groaning world into an Aceldama; and though this commandment is God's eternal interdict against unjust and ambitious wars, it is a falsehood of extremes to say that it brands with criminality a war of justice or necessary self-defence.‡ It is needless to speak of duelling, be-

* See Gen. ix. 6.

† See the excellent remarks of Dr. Kalisch, "Exodus," p. 367.

‡ Nor need I enter into the plain right of society to inflict capital punishment. The word "kill" in this commandment is a different word from that used for solemn judicial punishments, which are sanctioned in the very next chapter. See Ex. xxi.; Rom. xiii. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 14.

cause though that "fashionable mixture of murder and suicide" was not abolished even in living memory, its absurdity and wickedness are now patent to every Christian conscience. That the spirit of the commandment forbids suicide is obvious, and even the best pagans were well aware that the Everlasting had fixed His canon against self-slaughter. But this faithless despair, this flinging away the unique and sacred gift of God, this rushing with rude insult into the presence of God, is rare. There are but three suicides recorded in the four thousand years' history of the Old Testament, and but one—that of Judas—in the New. The commandment was meant to forbid murder, in days and ages when murder might be an every-day event.

You will say, as forbidding murder it is needless to most men now. Scarcely one man in a million becomes a murderer. How that may be I know not. It is thought by some that more murders by far are committed than ever are detected; and that many a child, for instance, as well as many another, has been done to death, directly or indirectly, even for so mean a bribe as an insurance fee. The first-born man was the first murderer, and the second was his murdered victim. A murderer is not always a dull, bestial, and ferocious soul. Many a tender and delicate woman, many a man well nurtured and of a nature akin to ours, who dreamt as little of being a murderer as we do, has become a murderer out of greed, or envy, or fear, or to hide some shame, or as the natural sequel

of indulged passion, or of a life made reckless by gambling or debauchery. And some of these have left behind them the awful warning of the slow degrees by which the temptation, smouldering at the bases of the life, has leapt, in one moment, into uncontrollable flame, and a great crime has shown itself to be no sudden aberration, but the necessary result and epitome of long years of secret faithlessness.

(ii.) But Christ warned us that the sixth commandment touches many a highly respectable person, who hardly thinks that a murderer is of the same flesh and blood with himself. Think only of St. John's words, "Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer";* or think of the words of Christ, "Ye heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother is in danger of the judgment." Now language in this matter is a good test, and there is an extraordinary variety of words which express the evil passions, which are the germ and substance of murderousness. The temptation which breaks out into so many and such virulent imposthumes must have deeply tainted the blood of our fallen humanity. Anger, rage, wrath, fury, vindictiveness, revenge, strife, contentiousness, rivalry, sullenness, malice, malignity, rancor, an unforgiving temper, spleen, unkindness, enmities, grudges, jealousies, faction, envy, spite, hatred, bitterness, misanthropy, detestation, execration, loathing,—all these, and other words which make up the black

* 1 John iii. 15, 17.

catalogues of uncharitableness, show the ugly variety of forms which are taken by this full-sized and many-headed monster. They are all forms of egotism turned sour. How often have we witnessed them, how often suffered from them! And when we find them, thick as autumnal leaves, rotting on the soil of universal history, and blown in putrescent heaps across our own lives, we are almost driven with a shudder to repeat that grim saying of the satirist, "We are all brothers; all Cains and Abels."

Now which of us is wholly free from one or other form of these murderous sins so common and so rank? Anger: how many almost pride themselves on being irritable! They think it shows their magnanimity, whereas it only shows pride and weak lack of self-control.* Into what an abyss of crime has base anger hurried many a miserable man! How often has a life been poisoned by one angry letter, and the wedded calm and golden peace of homes shattered by one hasty word! How right was Solomon when he said, "Anger resteth in the bosom of fools."† Then there is what we call "bearing a grudge." How often has one heard those wretched sayings, "I'll pay him out;" "I'll put a spoke in his wheel;" "I owe him one for that;" "I'll give him as good as I got!" Sometimes this becomes a feeble spite; sometimes it deepens into a sullen revenge, such as has turned men

* See Leighton's Works, iv. 148: "Omne infirmum natura querulum."

† See Prov. xvii. 9; Eccles. vii. 9.

into raging maniacs, and women into frightful Mænads. But the spirit of this commandment is, "Avenge not yourselves, neither give place unto wrath." And the spirit of all the New Testament is, "Do good to them that hate you." Christ's example was that, being reviled, He reviled not again; being persecuted, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. How well we all know these truths, and yet how many of us evade them by the subtle self-deception of our hearts!

> "Forgive? how many will say forgive, and find
> A sort of absolution in the sound
> To hate a little longer?"

And even when we do not evade the duty, how little, alas, do we practise it!

> "Forgiveness was his theme; and lo,
> What words of eloquence aglow!
> Their fine persuasiveness, he knew,
> Sped like winged fire from pew to pew!
> And yet, upon his homeward way
> He met relentlessly that day
> An ancient enemy, who pled
> Forgiveness for an ill long dead!
> And in quick words, with wrath aglow,
> He silenced his repentant foe."

Should not the parable of the unforgiving debtor show us that "unforgiving is unforgiven," and save us from thus fiercely seizing our fellow-servant by the throat and forcing from him his hundred pence?

Akin to these faults is the thin hate of envy. Scripture calls it "an evil eye," as when it tells us

that "Saul *eyed* David." The sensitive pride of small natures finds it intolerable that any man should excel them, or be preferred before them. In the wild picture of Salvator Rosa a youth, with uplifted poniard and the face of a demon, follows his young rival, who has won the crown, ready to stab him in the back. Let a man rise but the millionth part of an inch above his fellows, and there will be many to attack him, to belittle him, to abuse him anonymously. Has any rancorous detractor elaborated a sarcasm in his depreciation? His name is casually mentioned, and out comes the sneer from twenty lips with venomous delight!

> "And what with spites, and what with fears,
> They cannot let a body be,
> It's always ringing in their ears,
> 'They call this man as good as me.'"

When Mucius was seen looking miserable, Publius said of him, "Either some great misfortune has happened to him, or some great good fortune to some one else." The hateful remark of La Rochefoucauld, that there is something not altogether disagreeable to us in the misfortunes of our dearest friends, has given its name to that vile vice of *ἐπιχαιρεκακία*, the rejoicing in the calamities of others, the chuckle of the dying miser at the thought that his wealthy neighbor has become a bankrupt. And this envy passes into hatred, rancor, malice, and misanthropy, till a man is little better than a fiend. Now all these feelings, as Christ said, are potential murder. They

share the guilt of murder, and bring the fruit of God's punishment in the man's own deserved wretchedness. "They rankle and fester the soul, and fill it full of pain and disturbance." "An angry, violent, and disturbed man," says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, "is like that white bramble of Judea, of which Josephus reports that it is set on fire by impetuous winds, and consumes itself, and burns the neighbor plants." * He is indeed in a woful deadly condition in whose black heart any single element of this hatred dwells. Envy is "an infernal kind of fire, like your fires underground, that cannot be quenched."† How well does Giotto represent this vice with hooked claws and a viper coming out of her mouth, which turns round to fix its venomous fangs into her own forehead!

If to hate our brother in our heart be murder, are there no murderers here? But there may be many here who are murderers in other ways. Of the murders committed by slanderous tongues set on fire of hell, hateful and infinitely common as they are, I shall say but little; but I will mention other violations of this commandment. For as Christ extended its significance it covers the whole range of familiar intercourse. ‡

(i.) For instance, intolerance, religious persecution, the insolence of that *odium theologicum* which has

* Jer. Taylor, ii. 436; Jos. "Antt." v. 7, §2.

† Archbishop Leighton's Works, iv. 148.

‡ That we are not unduly extending the latitude of the commandment may be seen from Lev. xix. 14, 17, 18; Deut. xxii. 8, etc.

passed into a byword, has in it all the elements of murder. To my mind, one of the loathliest phenomena of history is the religion of the faggot, the thumb-screw, and the stake; and its most hateful spectacle that of some black Spanish Inquisitor, in the name of Christ's Church, thrusting his crucifix in the face of some saint of God whom he is burning alive because he spurned sacerdotal tyranny and hated lies. "Merciful God," says a recent writer, "what a commentary on the Gospels, that the Church of the meek Christ should have defended His cause by the same passions that crucified Him!" And though we no longer have *autos da fé* in Oxford or Smithfield, to this day the Sanhedrin of religious slanderers is still in full and secret session.* In the base pages of many a religious print, Christ is crucified afresh, and His

> "Sad face from the cross sees only this
> After the passion of a thousand years."

(ii.) And if many of you leave religious hatred to intolerant priests, is there no one here who has been guilty of that murder of souls which may often in God's sight be even more heinous than the murder of bodies?† To put stumbling-blocks in the way of the innocent; to tempt the weak into the paths of impurity or vice; to play the part of the devil; to *be* the tempting devil to others; to betray those who

* Dr. Washburn, "The Social Law of God," p. 125.

† "He who makes his fellow-creature sin commits a greater crime than the murderer."—EBN EZRA.

have trusted us; to destroy the souls for whom Christ died—these are the deadliest crimes which man can commit! He who lends to one who is younger and weaker some vile book in which, in ten minutes, he may read himself to death; he who acts to some comrade whom he calls his friend, as the torch-bearer to sin; he who first plants the seeds of hell in the soul of one of Christ's little ones; he who leads another over the thin border-line of ruin by teaching him to lie, or to gamble, or to drink, or to devastate the inner sanctities of his nature, may be, in God's sight, a ten times worse murderer than many who have been hanged. If there be an unpardonable sin, it is this. All God's commandments are linked together. To break one is often to break all. Many a liar who gets his blood-money by murdering reputations, many a seducer who walks in the high places of society, is, in God's sight, a murderer. God's revenge against murder shall find him out.

(iii.) Again, all selfish, all guilty, all oppressive trade is murder in God's sight. It may get a man into Parliament. It may make him a millionaire or a peer, but as surely as God builds all the superstructure of social order on the foundation-stone of Christian love, so surely is the spirit of Cain in all who thrive by the miseries of their fellow-men. In the old Levitic laws, if any one had an ox known to be vicious, and the ox gored a man, the owner of the ox was justly put to death. Is there then no guilt of blood on the man who will not spend a few pounds to

make his machinery safe? on the man who makes a fortune by houses which are either, on the one hand, hotbeds of pestilence, or, on the other, gins and traps of ruin for the bodies and souls of men? We have, thanks to good Lord Shaftesbury, wiped out the black page of oppression which, in living memory, stained England with the shame of women dragging trucks in the low black galleries of mines till they were bent double and dehumanized into beasts; and with "the deep damnation of the taking off" of thousands of English children, doomed, in factories, to a childhood of misery, a youth of sickness, and an early grave. But we have still sweaters' dens, and gambling hells, and murderous gin-shops, and streets infamous with immorality:—and all who, loving gold more than God, have any share in thus destroying the lives or souls of their brethren may be honorable among men, but they shall stand at the last day as murderers before the awful eyes of Him who sees the things that are, and sees them as they are.

(iv.) Once more, and very briefly: there is a sort of murder even in cold indifference, and callousness to human misery. The priest and the Levite were potential murderers of the poor wounded fellow-man whom, for their vain ceremonies and futile sacrifices, they passed by as though he concerned them not. If we treat any man with wanton contumely or contempt, if we do anything against his life or good estate, we violate the spirit of this commandment. But we violate it also if we share in, if we do not protest

against, if we do not, to the best of our power, endeavor to redress the intolerable multitude of wrongs inflicted on all sides by men upon their fellow-men; if we do not consider the poor; if we do not give of our lives and of our substance to the cause of God, and of His Christ.

Ah, my brethren, is not this commandment, like all the others, "exceeding broad"? But it is the commandment of Him who judgeth—not after the appearance; not by the cynical cleverness of leading articles; not by the glozing conventions of the world's morality—but who reads the heart. In keeping it there is great reward. We cannot obey even this one law in its fulness without gaining Christ's peace in our hearts. May Almighty God give us grace to read our lives by the light of it, and to judge ourselves now by its searching fire; lest we have to learn hereafter the terrible lesson, that "he that hateth his brother is a murderer, and abideth in death," and that no murderer can enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

"Adultery is an execrable and God-detested wrong-doing' (*στυγητὸν καὶ θεομισητὸν ἀδίκημα*).—PHILO.

"Major sum et ad majora genitus quam ut sim mancipium corporis mei."—SENECA.

"Love is felt by every one to be the spring of all that is excellent in human life. It is but following out that belief on its negative side to see that the distortion of love, which we know as lust, is not only one of the greatest evils in the human world, but the very focal centre of evil. That impulse, under the control of which persons are treated as things, and human bonds are as fugitive as human impulse, is the very antithesis of all that binds humanity in groups, and forms the school of duty. Wherever there is selfishness, wherever there is falsehood, there is something that is at its height in evil lust."—JULIA WEDGWOOD, "The Moral Ideal."

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

EXOD. XX. 14.

THERE is a correspondence between the two tables of the Decalogue: as the sixth commandment refers back to the first, so does the seventh to the second. Idolatry is a degrading and ruinous sin against the majesty of God; adultery is a degrading and ruinous sin against the majesty of manhood. Like the other commandments, the seventh is one of which it is impossible to speak fully in a single sermon. But as there is much which in so brief a time I cannot say, there is much also that I will not; for "chastity is a delicate, tender grace, and can scarcely endure the naming of itself, far less of that which is contrary to it."* To speak properly of it, in words sufficiently delicate, yet sufficiently strong, would require the tongue rather of an angel than of a weak and sinful man. To very few has it been given to warn men against impurity with manly precision, yet with virginal modesty, in those words, clear as crystal, yet penetrating as fire, which alone can reach this shame and mystery of our nature. In the language of Him who spake as never man spake, we see perfectly

* Archbishop Leighton.

united a stainless innocence and an absolute authority. The same high grace was granted by His Holy Spirit to St. Paul, to Dante, to Milton, whose lips were touched as by seraphim with that burning stone from off the altar, and whose rebuke flashes upon corruption like the sunbeam which no taint can soil. For an ordinary man to speak of such subjects requires infinite reverence, lest even his rebukes should be like the lights of the Pharos, which sometimes helped to wreck the vessels they were meant to save. To sensual sin the Scripture warning applies especially: "Avoid it; pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away." But while I would ask you to listen with deep seriousness, I say at once that I shall respect the holy reserve of nature; I shall not intrude into the shadow of that individuality in which the guilty soul must be alone with God. Let others coarsely and rudely rend the veil. Let others, as in the foul priestly abuses of auricular confession, dabble unbidden hands in the secrets of the microcosm; but of things of which it is a shame even to speak, I say with Dante, "Let us not talk of them, but look, and pass by."

1. Primarily, the seventh commandment forbids adultery, and the sins which, under slight differences, are cognate with it. Scripture speaks with indignant abhorrence of adultery. The Mosaic law, in its stern righteousness, unlike the hypocrisy of the world, punished it impartially with the death of both offenders. "This is a heinous crime," says Job; "yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judge. For it is a fire

that consumeth to destruction." "Marriage," says the Epistle to the Hebrews, "is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." And when the Hebrew prophet with passionate scorn says of the adulterers of his nation that "they were as fed horses in the morning," he implies that this sin obliterates the essential distinction between men and beasts. Even barbarous nations punish it, and Christianity shelters under the highest sanctions this instinct of human law. Would to God it were unnecessary to repeat this law of God! But the scandals which alike in the lowest and in the highest ranks of society so often deluge the world, as from some black and bitter spring of corruption, show that there is still national need for every righteous man to aid in affixing to this crime the stigma of his indelible abhorrence.

The infamy with its avenging wretchedness which Hogarth branded in his *Mariage à la Mode*, in our National Gallery, was pierced with a finer stab in two tragic pictures, a year or two ago, by Mr. Orchardson, in our Royal Academy—the *Mariage de Convenance* and "After." That ghastly breakfast-table, that ghastly dinner-table, the following loneliness and horror and blood-shed, are sermons—in which the two painters set visibly before us the violation of sacramental bonds and the anguish of shipwrecked homes. If we would save England from moral degeneracy, we must set our face against the notion that marriage is only a legal contract; against the degra-

dation of it, in the higher classes, into a mercenary falsehood; against the undertaking of it, in the lower, rashly, unadvisedly, wantonly, like brute beasts which have no understanding. We must set our face, too, against the criminal laxity of divorce, and the facile re-marriage of those who have once violated the holy bond. We must restore that high conception of marriage in which even the Roman code defined it as "the partnership of the whole life, the participation of all rights, human and divine." We must insist on the recognition by all Christians of its holy mystery as signifying the mystical union between Christ and the Church. We must think of it as Tertullian in one age described it, and Bishop Jeremy Taylor in another, as "one hope, one vow, one worship, one discipline; a happiness which the Church ratifies, the oblation confirms, the benediction seals, angels announce, the Father declares valid;" * as "shut up and secured by all the arts of Heaven, by honor and reputation, by fear and shame, by interest and high regards."† And while we realize the sacredness of that holy estate of matrimony, we must abhor the heinousness of the treachery by which it is dissolved. When we think of the divine sanctity of home, the fairest possession left to miserable man out of the wreck of Paradise; when we consider the catastrophes which have burst, not only over men, but over whole nations, from the violation, even in single in-

* Tert. "Ad Uxorem," ii. 8.

† Jer. Taylor, "The Marriage Ring."

stances, of the marriage bond, surely the soul of that man must be not only defiled, but almost brutish, which, for the "brief pang and epilepsy" of his vile selfishness, can set in motion consequences so horrible. "Whoso committeth adultery," says Solomon, "lacketh understanding; he that doeth it, destroyeth his own life. A wound and dishonor shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away, for jealousy is the rage of man; he will not spare in the day of vengeance." The most awful tragedies of ancient and modern times hinge on this offence.* The oldest poem of Greece, the "Iliad," turns on the ruin of an adulterer and his whole nation; the "Odyssey" is the glorification of conjugal fidelity.† The mightiest trilogy of Æschylus reveals, in hues of earthquake and eclipse, the outcome of lawless love, the murder of the guilty husband, the vengeance which burst on the murderess and her paramour, the avenging furies that tormented the matricide. And, in modern times, who that has grasped the heartrending significance of "Othello" can fail to measure the horror of this crime when he reads the wild cry of the outraged Moor:

> "Had it pleased Heaven
> To try me with affliction; had they rained
> All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head;
> I should have found in some place of my soul
> A drop of patience. . . .

* See Maurice, "Social Morality," p. 52.

† Ulysses preferred Penelope to Calypso. "Vetulam prætulit immortalitati."

> But there, where I have garner'd up my heart;
> Where either I must live, or bear no life . . .
> Turn thy complexion there,
> Patience! thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin,
> Ay, there, look grim as hell!"

Thus, then, art and literature, and the conscience of mankind, and the warnings of history, and the experience of humanity, and the Mosaic law, and Christ and His Apostles, and all the genius of twenty centuries, brand this sin as dastardly, treacherous, and vile; and the conscience of that man must indeed be seared as with a hot iron who can be guilty of it and not sink to the very earth for shame.

2. And if adultery be thus heinous, let no bad man, in the laxity of public opinion, flatter himself that sins analogous to it are much, if at all, less execrable. Is there no malediction of Scripture on the seducer?* Is it nothing to

> "take off the rose
> From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
> And set a blister there?"

Nothing to lure innocence to destruction, and place a stumbling-block before the weak souls for which Christ died? "Oh, if there be judgment in heaven," says Foster to the villain Varley, in "Kenilworth," "thou hast deserved it, and wilt meet it. Thou hast destroyed her by means of her best affections. It is a seething of the kid in the mother's milk." The

* The Hebrew word in this commandment, *nā-aph*, includes all forms of moral uncleanness.

heinousness of sins is often only seen in their natural consequences. Let the nature of the injury inflicted by the seducer be judged from one crime to which, as we see month by month in the records of criminal justice, it often leads its victims. If there be one passionate fondness which burns unbidden in the human breast, nay, which is felt even by the stork upon the house-top and the tigress in her lair; if there be one duty indicated by all that love can prompt and pity plead, it is the love of a mother for her little one. Yet even the mysterious power of this pure and indefinable tenderness has thousands of times been quenched by the unsupportable agony which leads the betrayed to hide her shame by murdering her child. It is this horrible development and the avalanche of ruin which often follows that form the subject of Sir Walter Scott's "Heart of Midlothian" and George Eliot's "Adam Bede," two of the most pathetic tales of modern days. The seducer may be lightly pardoned by a godless and frivolous society; he may be welcomed to fine drawing-rooms; fashionable women may scheme to catch him for their daughters; through all his long, corrupting, ill-flavored life he may never lack for luxuries and applause; but which is the worse murderer—the gay libertine, whom the law cannot touch, or the half-crazed, ruined girl, whom his soft, damnable treacheries have inveigled into the snare, and who in her madness strangles her new-born babe? By what law of justice is the weaker and the tempted to be spurned

and hanged, while the stronger and the guiltier is fawned upon and praised? What law of justice forgives the obscene bird of prey, while it kicks out of its path the soiled and bleeding dove? A truer feeling was expressed by the fine song:

"Where shall the traitor rest,
He, the deceiver,
Who could win maiden's breast,
Ruin, and leave her?
In the lost battle, borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the dying—
There shall he be lying—
Eleu loro,
There shall he be lying!

"Her wing shall the eagle flap
O'er the false-hearted;
His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
Ere life be parted.
Shame and dishonor sit
By his grave ever;
Blessing shall hallow it—
Never, oh never—
Eleu loro,
Never, oh never!"

Yes! upon that traitor God's curse shall rest; and even if he be long left alone "in ghastly smooth life, dead at heart," yet, if he continue ever so hardened, sooner or later the harpies shall defile his banquets with foul wings, and affright them with dismal screams, and of all which is left him of his miserable life "that which the palmer worm hath left shall the canker eat, and that which the canker hath left shall

the caterpillar eat, and there shall be none to restore to him the years which the locust hath eaten."

3. And if there be any here who might shudder to be guilty of these violations of the seventh commandment, and have yet, by their lawless passions, contributed to the vices which defile the streets of great cities, have they no cause to tremble before God? It is said that London alone is shamed with the awful number of eighty thousand of the fallen; and if this indeed be so, one wonders that the lightnings do not begin already to flicker on the horizon! Men of the world may sneer, or may palliate the offence; for fools make a mock at sin. But the voice of history warns us by the ruin of nations, and the voice of universal experience by the ruin of individuals. The poet of innocence was right when he sang:

> "The harlot's cry from street to street
> Shall weave old England's winding-sheet";

and Solomon was right when he said, "He knoweth not that the dead are there, and her guests in the depths of hell." Is it nothing, I ask again, to spread the kingdom of the devil, to undo the work of Christ, to mar the living temple of the Spirit of God? Is it such a nothing to pass through Gehenna-fires to the foul Moloch of animal passion the souls for which Christ died? Is it such a nothing for men to contribute their quota to the sins which inflict a blighted destiny and a polluted soul on those who, in the light of womanhood, were meant to wear the rose of its

beauty and the lily of its pureness? Oh, if young men had in their souls one spark of true Christian chivalry, should not all womanhood be no less sacred to them than that of mother, or sister, or future wife? And even if they have no touch of chivalry, might they not read the true nature of their sin in the letters of fire wherewith God has written its condemnation in its consequences? Do they never think of these, their victims, dying in shame and agony, with every flower in the garland of their happiness scorched as by a demon's breath? Follow that wretched, ragged, shivering, diseased, emaciated figure of a woman—or one who was once that gracious thing—through the miry streets to the river-side, where, after a few short years of degradation, having made of all life a shipwreck—lost, lost, lost!—unwept, unknown, uncared for—she flings herself from the bridge into the tide, and there is a shriek, and a black ripple, and all is still. She was once a happy, innocent child. A mother's holy kiss once lingered on her rosy cheek. And now! Young man, you who are so sleek and prosperous—so well educated, so surrounded with blessings—is this your handiwork? Was it to forward these deeds of darkness that God bade you live? And when such has been her frightful punishment, think you to escape unscathed?

4. Unscathed? The great English dramatist, who of all men that ever lived read deepest in the secrets of the human heart, shows us, in his "Measure for Measure," the weak youth who, utterly effeminated

by corruption, is willing to save his own life by his sister's shame; and it is into his feeble, corrupted lips that he puts the miserable plea:

> "Sure, it is no sin,
> Or of the deadly seven it is the least."

But the Rabbis saw truly that of all sins it was the one on which God looked with least long-sufferance. For certainly of all sins it degrades men lowest to the level of the beasts. As the prophets and apostles alike tell us, impurity takes away the understanding; darkens it; brings upon it a penal blindness; makes it past feeling; fills it with dulness, bitterness, and guilty remembrance.* It is a sin against mankind, for it adds virulence to man's heaviest curse, and undoes the influence of his purest sympathies.† It is a sin against the commonwealth, for uncleanness has ever been the deadliest cankerworm at the root of kingdoms. It is a sin against the family, for it undermines the holy bases on which it rests. It is a sin against the body, for, as St. Paul says, every other sin which a man commits is without the body, but he who sins thus sins against his own body. It is a sin against the soul, for Scripture says that he who sins thus destroyeth his own soul. It is a sin against God and His image upon us, which is purity and

* Hos. iv. 11; Eph. iv. 19; Prov. vi. 32.

† "The heart cannot throw off its original selfishness without the aid of some complete and enduring affection."—COMTE, "General View of Positivism," p. 252.

chastity. It is a sin against Christ and His members—against the Holy Spirit and His indwelling presence. It is the worst form of sacrilege, because it defiles, as with the hoofs of swine, the temple of the Most High.* In many of its forms it murders two souls at once, so that the sinner perishes not alone in his iniquity. I do not think that they exaggerate who call it the most dangerous of all sins in its polluting, enslaving, and deadening effects, so that it wrings from the prophet Jeremiah the cry, "How shall I pardon for these things, saith the Lord?" And Solomon says, "Can a man take fire in his bosom and not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" And of this deep pit he says, "He that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein."

5. But surely there is no need even for the clear testimony of the word of God, when the facts of life reveal with such lurid distinctness the penalties which, to wean man from self-destruction, God has scattered upon forbidden lusts. How many sinners against the laws of chastity escape even the physical consequences? Are there none here who know, to their cost, that their bones are full of the sin of their youth, which shall lie down with them in the dust? Are

* 1 Cor. iii. 15, 16, 17, vi. 9.

"Defectio virium adolescentiæ vitiis efficitur sæpius quam senectutis."—Cic. "De Senect."

"Quæ peccamus juvenes ea luimus senes."

"The excesses of youth are bills drawn by Time, payable thirty years after date."—COLTON.

there none here who recognize the frightful resemblance between their sin and its natural penalties? Ask the physician what is the real name, what is the hidden cause, of a hundred fell forms of anguish and misery, which he calls by other titles, and which, sometimes, after long quiescence, break out from the poisoned blood of the transgressor, or blight his innocent children with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death? And even if the body escapes, does the soul ever escape? Does not the penitent poet confess that impurity

> "hardens all within,
> And petrifies the feeling"?

Does not the novelist tell us that the paralyzing spectacle of a young man's ruined life, surrounded by no golden halo of fiction, but bare and loathsome—the daily spectacle of a body depraved by the infectious influence of the vice-polluted soul—had indeed caused to those who witnessed it a dreadful sorrow, but that its recollection acted as a wholesome antidote to temptation, "inscribing on the reason the conviction that unlawful pleasure is delusive and envenomed pleasure; its hollowness disappoints at the time, its poison cruelly tortures afterwards, its effects deprave forever"? *

6. But many who hear me may never have been guilty of these violations of this commandment, for whom it may yet have a terrible voice of warning. You know how Christ extended this prohibition to

* Charlotte Brontë, "The Professor."

the thoughts of the heart. He said in the Temple to those who had dragged thither the shamed adulteress, "He that is without sin among you, first cast a stone at her;" and they, being "convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest even unto the last." Ah! many have lived impure lives who have not broken the letter of this commandment. And what a curse and a peril is there in the smouldering of this hidden fire! For irregularity has no limits, nor can any sinner tell when, or where, or how it may break out. Always it involves the loss of innocence, which is man's sweetest blessing; always the presence of shame and peril.

> "So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity,
> That, when a soul is found sincerely so,
> A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
> Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;
> . . . but when lust
> By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
> But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
> Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
> The soul grows clotted by contagion."

Dread is the curse of a heart no longer pure. Its peace is gone, its honor, its native dignity. It is left naked to guilty shame. It becomes as a troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. Just as one touch brushes the dew from off the rose, and one hot breath of wind withers the vernal flowers, so one evil hour can wipe off innocence from the heart. Once Dinah went forth; how did she return? Once David upon his palace roof was not on

his guard against sensual snares: with what sacrificial anguish, with what broken hearts, with what tears of blood had that sin to be expiated even unto death! Ah! how many a home has been smitten, how many a youth blighted, how many a fair dawn overclouded by these sins! How many pale spectres of the lost start from their graves to warn men from these sins with the waving of their wasted hands! And behind them all stands God's judgment; behind the clouds, the night! Without are murderers, fornicators, adulterers, effeminate! Alas! how dreary, how shudderingly cold is that without.* Blessed—and they alone blessed—blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!

7. If then you yearn for this inestimable blessedness which will be worth to you all the world beside, take these last counsels. You must flee from idleness; for idleness lays you open to every assault of the devil, and the sins which called down God's fire from Heaven had their root, we are t[illegible]ld, in pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness. You must flee from evil companions; for evil associations corrupt good habits. You must flee from all places of loose amusement, and learn to love that dear home where there is the old piety and the old purity of youth, and where the prayers of parents and sisters bend like angels over you. You must flee youthful

* See Dr. F. Ahlfeld, "Katechismuspredigten," pp. 169–179. For exhortations to purity, see 1 Thess. iv. 4; 1 Cor. iii. 17, vi. 18, 19; Col. iii. 5; Eph. v. 11–14; 1 Pet. ii. 11; Matt. v. 27–32.

lusts, and avoiding all over-indulgence to softness, must sternly keep your body in temperance, soberness, and chastity; and you must watch against all incentives from loose talk, loose books, loose opinion. In combating these inordinate affections, you must be like those ancient Parthians, who overcame by flight. You must learn to respect the image of God, and a sacred nature, in yourselves; holding yourselves "more sacred than any dedicated altar," recognizing your mortal members as the members of Christ, and your mortal bodies as the temples of His Spirit; so that more even than the offence of others you will dread and blush at the reflection of your own severe and modest eye upon yourselves, should it see you doing or imagining anything which is sinful, were it even in the deepest secrecy.* You must learn to respect the image of God, and a sacred nature, in all others, to deface which by any vileness of yours you must abhor as the worst of crimes. You must "make your moral being your prime care." You must practise such self-discipline as, preserving an honest self-esteem for the fineness and bloom of your own soul, may save you from polluting it. You must realize the indwelling and besetting presence of Him whose eye reads the secrets of your hearts, until, with the pure and lovely youth who stands in Scripture as the eternal type of victory over sensual temptation, you ask with indignation, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Something you

* Milton: "Reason of Church Government."

may gain, in the high path of purity, from plain and simple diet; from healthy exercise; from wholesome habits; from untainted air; from the avoidance of all narcotics and stimulants; from the imagination purified by noble books, delightful studies, and manly friendships. Yet more you may gain from prayer; from faithful public worship; from hallowed Sundays; from Holy Communions; from taking your share in all good works for the furtherance of the kingdom of Christ. Yet all these will fail if you do not keep watch over the thoughts of your hearts. Those filthy birds of impure thoughts, if they be not driven away and beaten off when they light on the soul, will leave a stain which grieves the Holy Spirit of God.* If once you suffer yourselves to indulge in unwholesome day-dreams and morbid imaginations, farewell to all purity and peace! From the serpent's egg shall break forth the cockatrice, and its end shall be a fiery flying serpent. For "from within, out of the heart," as Christ said, "proceed evil thoughts, and then fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye." Oh, consider how awful are the interests at stake! "To burn away in mad waste the divine aromas and plainly celestial elements of our nature," says Thomas Carlyle, "to change our holy of holies into a place of riot, to make the soul itself hard, impious, barren! Surely a day is coming when it will be known again what virtue is in purity and continence of life; how divine is the blush

* Leighton, Works, iv. 151.

of young, human cheeks; how high, beneficent, sternly inexorable, if forgotten, is the duty laid, not on women only, but on every creature in regard to these particulars. Well, if such a day never come again, then I perceive much else will never come. Magnanimity and depth of insight will never come; heroic purity of heart and of eye; noble, pious valor to amend us, and the age of bronze and lacquer; how can they ever come? The scandalous age of hungry animalisms, spiritual impotencies, and mendacities, will have to run its course till the pit swallow it." Oh! all you who have already fallen, struggle, ere it be too late, out of the drowning slough; and you who have not yet been entangled in the snare of the devil, resist with all your might the beginnings of evil. If you dabble with base curiosity, if you dally with thoughts and occasions of evil, the temptation will spring upon you like an armed man, and haply thrust you into horrible captivity. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" The fire is ever there. Will it not blaze, if you heap fuel, if you pour oil upon it? Therefore try to slay this temptation at a blow; and instead of standing, with morbid self-introspection, in agonized and shivering watch over the impulses of your lower nature, seek by prayer, and by the aid of Christ, a total change of heart. And let all, every one of us, pray to God to keep us His own dear children. "Give us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us." Let us go to

Christ to be pardoned for all past unfaithfulness; to be strengthened in every present holy resolution; to be saved from the subtle glamour of our own passions, and the desperate deceitfulness of our own hearts. Let us seek the perpetual aid of that Holy Spirit

> "that doth prefer
> Before all temples the upright heart and pure."

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God! Lord, grant to us, Thy children, this Thy most divine beatitude, that following Thee with pure hearts and minds, we may see Thy face and Thy name be written upon our foreheads.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

"Observe the practical issue of religious corruption. Show me a people where trade is dishonest, and I will show you a people where religion is a sham."—FROUDE, "Short Studies," i. 123.

Thou shalt not steal.

Exod. xx. 15.

THE sixth commandment gives us, in its true breadth, the law of kindness; the seventh, the law of purity. The eighth, which is the law of honesty, adds one more element to the golden rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." If any have been hitherto inclined to say, when they heard the commandment read, "We are not murderers, we are not adulterers, and therefore the repetition of these commandments is superfluous for us," I humbly hope that what I have already said will show you how superficial is such an estimate of God's fiery law. But some may still feel inclined to say, "We may not be absolutely kind, we may not be wholly pure in heart; but we are at least free from this contemptible sin of thieving." Brethren, will you say so when you have heard all? "Yes!" you indignantly repeat, "whatever may be our faults, we are certainly honest." Alas! the very meaning of the word honesty has been degraded. It now means doing nothing which is technically illegal; but once it meant the honor, the nobleness which preferred equity to self-interest, and would rather suffer from guileless simplicity than profit by the mean cleverness which takes advantage

of the ignorance of others. When St. Paul said, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men," he did not mean merely that his converts were not to be thieves or cheats. The Greek word, καλὸς, which he uses, implies all moral beauty, all spiritual nobleness. The καλὸς κἀγαθὸς in Greek meant a man as he should be, a perfect man and an upright.* It meant one who

"wore without reproach
The grand old name of gentleman,"

as opposed to petty tricksters and cozeners, with no object but their own gain. When Shakespeare says of the noble Timon, "Every man has his fault, and honesty is his," he did not merely mean that Timon was incapable of making money by astute rascalities, but that he was magnificently generous and nobly unsuspecting. Think not, then, that this commandment only concerns a few thieves and burglars, and such ignoble traffickers as think that sharp practice is rather to their credit than otherwise. "The truth is, there is scarcely one of the commandments so universally broken," says good Archbishop Leighton, "and whereof the breach is so little observed, and so seldom repented of. Truly he is a rare man who offends not, and that remarkably (if men would remark themselves), against this commandment, Thou shalt not steal."† "Let me see the man," says another, "who can attend, without a monitor, to the whisper of equity; who is an advocate with himself for every

* Arist. "Magn Mor." ii. 9, § 2.
† Works, iv. 157.

one who has a claim upon him; who sees his own cause with the same eye with which he looks upon that of another, his own reasons not magnified by self-interest, another's not diminished by inability to maintain them. . . . In a word, give me the man who finds no inducement to do wrong in the power of doing it, and I will pronounce him a master in all the virtues and duties which belong to the intercourse of men." * It is in this sense that Fletcher says:

> "Man is his own star, and that soul that can
> Be honest is the only perfect man." †

and Pope says:

> "An honest man's the noblest work of God;"

and Cowper, meaning the highest possible praise, says that his friend, Joseph Hill,

> "Might traverse England safely through and through,
> An honest man, close buttoned to the chin,
> Broadcloth without and a warm heart within;"

and Burns sang:

> "A prince can mak' a belted knight,
> A marquis, duke, and a' that;
> But an honest man's aboon his might,
> Guid faith, he maunna fa' that."

2. The crime of theft is, of all others, the meanest and most despicable. If murder and ferocity, the outcome of sullen hatred, make man akin to the

* Ogden, "Sermons," ii. 240. See, too, Washburn, pp. 153, 156.
† "Upon an Honest Man's Fortune."

animals in their fiercest, and uncleanness makes him akin to them in their lewdest characteristics, then theft allies him to them in their slyest and most cunning. All three are forms of depraved and perverted selfishness. It may be that most animals cannot but follow the blind brutalities of instinct. But into man's nostrils God breathed the breath of life; and God gave him reason and conscience expressly that, having dominion over the animals, he might rise to altitudes and sanctities of which it is not granted to them to dream. Well may the poet say:

> "Unless above himself he can
> Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!"

If a man make his own low self the end of everything; living to indulge his malice; to fling the reins on the neck of his unbridled lusts; to be a mere picker and stealer, helping himself, in any way, to that which belongs to others—he is a beast, no more. "Men," says Solomon, "do not despise a thief if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry." Yet many a man has willingly starved rather than even save his life by this meanness. But a man who, being abundantly supplied with the necessaries of life, battens upon fraud which robs his neighbors of the just fruits of their honest struggles and loyal industries, in what respect is he morally superior to the monkeys whom you see in their cages slyly attempting to steal one another's food? Can you imagine a much more detestable enemy of all society than the burglar?

There are few crimes which the law should put down with sterner indignation. For even a small handful of these wretches inspires terror into thousands of the helpless, and adds a new anxiety and misery to a nation's life. But every thief is a burglar of a less dangerous yet meaner type.

3. But there are many kinds of theft. It is not only against the sneaking or the murderous thief, but against all who plunder others, even by means ostensibly legal: it is against all usurers, cheats, extortioners, foul dealers in bargains and contracts; it is against all who by their deceits, chicaneries, and swindlings sin against the rights of their neighbors, that the eighth commandment is directed; and against all such Christ and His Apostles have closed the gates of the kingdom of God.* Unfit to be citizens of any worthy earthly commonwealth, how is it possible that, till they have been utterly purged of these vile sins, they should be citizens of that heavenly city of which the builder and maker is God?

4. Let us look at some of the many violations of this commandment, and, not by man's leaden and flexible rule, but as in God's sight, diligently examine ourselves whether we be guilty of them, or of any approach to them; since, as Theophrastus says, "Sympathy with rascality is sister to rascality itself." †

* Lev. xix. 13. The words used in the New Testament are *ἀποστερεῖν*, 1 Cor. vi. 8; *νοσφίζειν*, Tit. ii. 10; *πλεονεκτεῖν*, 1 Thess. iv. 6; *κλέπται, πλεονέκται, ἅρπαγες*, 1 Cor. vi. 10.

† Theophr. "Charact." *καὶ τὸ ὅλον ἡ φιλοπονηρία ἀδελφή ἐστι τῆς πονηρίας.*

(i.) Take the world of commerce. All its sins and shames, in this age as in every age, have sprung from avarice. "To what dost thou not compel the breasts of men, cursed hunger for gold?" sang the Roman poet nineteen hundred years ago. To what abysses of treachery it can lead men, Pagan Rome had a terrible example in her Punic wars, when, though her destinies trembled in the balance, her fraudulent contractors did not hesitate to make money at the possible cost of the very existence of their country. "During such a war," says the historian of Rome, "scoundrels get rich, while honest citizens become poor." And the temptations of the human heart appear to be the same in all ages and countries; for now, amid the appalling catastrophe of the Russian famine—amid perishing children and a starving peasantry—we read that the Russian papers are denouncing in unmeasured terms the continued adulteration of corn and flour. There we see greedy dealers and fraudulent middlemen enriching themselves by mixing the flour of the perishing poor with husks and silica and sand and leaves and wood to the extent of thirty and even (it is said) of fifty per cent.

Now is there any one who will stand up and say that English commerce and trade are spotless? That there are thousands, I might say tens of thousands, of honest merchants and traders—honest, I mean, in the high sense in which I have used the word—I know. But are there none who are dishonest? Is there, for instance, no adulteration? Yet what is

adulteration—whether of cloth, or silk, or sugar, or butter, or milk, or bread, or wine—but theft? How much may now exist of the bribery of sub-traders; of gaining confidence in one direction in order to betray it fraudulently in another; of forging trade-marks; of spurious imitations; of work scamped, veneered, and shamefully done; of mere tricks defended as trade customs; of false balances and deceitful weights, which are an abomination to the Lord; of making the ephah small and the shekel great—*i.e.*, of scanting the measure and inflating the cost;—how far these things exist I cannot say. But so far as they do exist, even if those who are guilty of them be millionaires, whom all the world flatters—even if they corrupt their organs in the Press to slander those who denounce their guilt—I still say that, in the reality of things, men guilty of such practices are in God's sight and in the light of this commandment thieves.* As to whether our commerce and trade be deeply corrupted or not, I have no means of knowing. Mr.

* The following note applies to America:—"*Why Business Men Fail.—Bradstreet's* has for two years past carried on an interesting investigation into the causes of bankruptcies in the United States, by examining, as far as may be, the main cause of each individual commercial failure. From the statistics of what is called 'business mortality' thus obtained, it appears that no fewer than 875 were due to direct fraud. Only about twenty per cent. of the failures were due to what may be called legitimate causes and undue competition, while four-fifths of the men who fail are either dishonest or incompetent—those who fail through lack of capital (more than a third of the whole) being sometimes included under one of these two heads, sometimes under the other, according to the circumstances of the case."

Herbert Spencer, in a very elaborate examination reprinted not many years ago, declared emphatically that it is. Carlyle, in his stormful, exaggerated way, described all England as praying to Beelzebub: "Help us, thou great lord of shoddy, adulteration, and misfeasance, to do our work with a maximum of slimness, swiftness, profit, and mendacity, for the devil's sake. Amen." General Gordon wrote: "I declare the products of Great Britain have terribly fallen off. You can never get a good thing nowadays. It is money, money, money with us. We are full of tricks in every trade."

These are stern testimonies of men widely different from each other; and hosts of other writers, down to the present day, some of them writing with much detail, have asserted that much of our trade is tainted with immorality. They may be mistaken; they may exaggerate; things may have mended since some of them wrote; but so far as trade dishonesties and trade immoralities do exist, they flagrantly violate this law of the Most High God. And that to some extent they do exist only the venal defenders of wrongdoing and the venal slanderers of the upright can deny. Quite recently I read in the *Times* a report of the chief constable of a single city which bears no bad name among English cities; yet he says that "there never was a time when crimes were so frequently committed by persons of good education as now." The value of property stolen in Manchester alone in 1891 was £6398, while the amount of which

firms and individuals were defrauded by persons of good education, by forgery and the like during the same year, was £90,000. In the majority of these cases the delinquencies are hushed up. "Long firm frauds," he says, "which are prevalent in all parts of the country, require the ingenuity and dexterity which good education alone can give." Again, I read also, in another paper, that the London County Council prosecuted and punished no less than 70,000 instances of various kinds of fraud. If the trade of all who hear or read these words is so perfectly pure, so absolutely and scrupulously honest, that it will bear, not only the lying gloss of man's conventional approval, but the sunlike scrutiny of God's eternal eye, then "let the galled jade wince—*their* withers are unwrung." Let them rejoice and be glad. But no one is injured by the repetition of those faithful and fearless warnings of which Scripture is full; for "there is a current in the great maelstrom of modern trade which draws into it the weak vessel sailing on its perilous edge." The temptations of trade are daily and manifold. "Many," says the son of Sirach, "have sinned for a trifle; and as a nail sticketh fast between the joinings of the stones, so sin sticketh between buying and selling." Nothing but the fear of God can keep man safe. He who cheats his neighbor, however plausibly, may get rich by it; but, as Carlyle says, "he believes in tortuosity, and has the supreme quack for his god." The prophet Zechariah saw the genius of commercial iniquity, shut up in a cask under a plate of lead, and

carried away to the land of guile by two women with the wind in their stork-like wings; and he saw also that the flying curse would smite and consume that land.* Had God granted to England that banishment of the spirit of fraud, how many broken hearts might have been spared! how many homes might have been saved from ruin, how many families from destitution, caused by the schemes, of which, as Edmund Burke said, "Extortion is the assessor, fraud the cashier, confusion the accountant, concealment the reporter, and oblivion the remembrancer!" If all who, in our memory, have been ruined by forgeries, by embezzlements, by bank failures, by the appropriation of securities, by the crash of swindling speculations, by the collapse of bubble companies, by sham mines, by all the horrible chicaneries of legalized astuteness and illegal guilt—guilt which does not shrink from widespread misery of its neighbors, so it can but satisfy its own burning and godless greed—could be assembled here, would they not form a congregation many times larger than this? And if that be so, what smooth and venal false prophet will dare to assert that all is well, and that there is no need in England to repeat that God will always be the avenger of dishonesty?†

* Zech. v. 5-11.

† Mr. Ben Tillett (in *The Albemarle*) says: "Every development of luxury, every habit contracted of living only by pleasure, means a development of greater cunning in manipulating money markets, and instead of having capital steadily controlled, a feverish spirit of gambling will manifest itself. So that the gambling in warrants

(ii.) Again, every form of sacrilege is theft. "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts. But ye say, wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? yet ye rob Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with the curse, for ye rob Me, even the whole nation." So writes the last of the Old Testament prophets. Such tithes, you will say, are abolished. The admonition does not touch us. I answer, is the conscience of every man here easy as to what he gives of his income? The income of England in our century has increased sevenfold, its population only fivefold. According to Mr. Gladstone, the present income of this nation is more than one thousand millions of pounds a year. Our wealth has increased more in the last century than for all the six previous centuries put together. Our mere annual accumulations and hoardings are said to amount to two hundred and forty millions a year;—more than one third of the entire income of the population. Because tithes are abolished, are our duties *nil* to the poor, to the relief of human misery, to the

and other methods of exchange means irregularity, unsteadiness at manufacturing centres, dislocating trade, breeding a feeling of insecurity among employers—an insecurity which spells ruin and starvation to thousands of homes and industries which otherwise would be flourishing. The effect of every plunge and corner on the Exchange is felt with deadly effect by the workers. When a few gamblers in pig-iron warrants can affect by their dealings the whole of the iron and engineering trade, throw out of employment thousands, close great works by the dozen, we are face to face with men whose dealings are more damnable than the plungers at Tattersall's."

Church of God? Is it right that our increasing resources should flow on like a mighty tide while our charities only exude by driblets?

How many remember that "he who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, and He will repay it"? How many really believe that God will be no man's debtor; that he who soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he who soweth with blessings shall reap with blessings; that the only wealth which a man can possess forever is that which he has given in generous love? Is our model to be Dives in purple and fine linen, with Lazarus starving at his gate; or the rich fool whose only notion of his duties was to pull down his barns and build greater, and say to his soul, "Eat, drink, and be merry"? The churl and the niggard rob both man and God. The author of the "Gospel of Wealth" has argued that the surplus property of the wealthy should be a great treasure administered for the common good; that the accumulation of stagnant wealth to be bequeathed to heirs is a vainglory in the giver, and may be a ruin to the receiver; and that the man who dies a millionaire dies disgraced. This, at any rate, I will say, that to die a millionaire is no particular credit to any man, but involves him assuredly in an immense and frightful responsibility.

(iii.) Again, *debt* is a form of dishonesty which comes under the stigma of this commandment. Men or women who order goods for which they have no money to pay are as much cheats as though they

stole. They are criminally taking that which is not their own. Tradesmen used bitterly to bewail their bad debts; they used to make them an excuse for heavy prices; and thus the dishonesty of buyers acted reciprocally on the sellers. In thousands of wasted lives debt has been the beginning of all misery and all mischief. We read the other day of a fine lady, dressed splendidly in a robe of priceless beauty, adorned with diamonds, seated at a banquet, while the poor woman who had made the dress, and had not been paid for it, dined on Christmas-day with her children on bread and water, making believe that they were very merry, that they might hide their anguish and destitution from the father who lay sick in another room. The heartlessness of keeping poor tradesmen waiting is bad enough; the dishonesty of not paying them at all is shameful. There is but one honest rule for any honest man, which is to pay his way, live well within his income, and absolutely forego what he cannot honorably afford. Such a man can

> "Look the whole world in the face,
> For he owes not any man;"

but he who is extravagant, forfeits alike his integrity and his peace.

(iv.) Again, to defraud the hireling of his wages is a direct sin against this commandment. The law, "Thou shalt not steal," is meant to protect the indefeasible rights of the human race. To pay starvation wages; to employ women on terms which render it

impossible for them to live without eking out their wretched pittances by lives of sin; to treat human beings as chattels, whose rights are cancelled by the tyrannies of the market; to abuse the superiority given us by the possession of capital, or the wretchedness of destitution; to use our little greatness, to wring from those whom we employ hours of labor which render their lives a burden and a misery—this is to grind the faces of the poor. The customs of society may excuse it; the laws of a ruthless political economy may defend it; but in God's eyes, when we act thus, "we commit the double offence of dishonesty and oppression." By taking advantage of distress and necessity to secure cheap prices, we add cruelty to greed. "There is," said Cardinal Manning, "a dictate of nature, more imperious and more ancient than any bargain between man and man, that the remuneration of the wage-earner must be enough to support him in reasonable and frugal comfort."

(v.) Again, the vices of betting and gambling are against the whole spirit of this commandment. Money is a sacred trust. It is not our own to use as we like. A man has no more right to bet and gamble it away, to stimulate the monotony of life by unhallowed excitement, than he has to fling it into the sea. Still less has he a right to encourage a ruinous impulse, which fills our prisons and blights hundreds of careers. Gambling and betting are vices in which, but for the sanction of custom which blinds so many consciences, it might have been thought that an

honest man would blush even more to gain than to lose. Money so gained, or so lost, represents nothing but idleness or sin. A man who aims at the highest ideal should blush to touch any money which he has not honestly earned. He should be ashamed to build his fortune on sums wrung from the cupidity, the folly, or the bane of his fellow-men.

5. Now, in all these matters of morality, God helps us to see what is best for us. Ill-gotten gains never prosper. Nothing is more certain, as a general result of the world's experience, than that "the robbery of the wicked shall destroy them"; that "treasures of wickedness profit nothing"; that "the getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro by them that seek death"; that "he who is greedy of gain troubleth his own house." "As the partridge sitteth upon eggs and hatcheth them not, so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool." * True, the man who is honest only because it is the best policy is, as Archbishop Whately said, no better than a rogue; but that the facts of all life prove honesty to be the true path to success is the seal of God's approval upon it, just as the curse which always in the long run lights upon dishonesty is the stamp of God's abhorrence.

6. But, as you will have learnt already from what each commandment has taught us, God, in this His law, does not merely forbid iniquities, but inculcates

* Jer. xvii. 11.

eternal principles. The negative abstention from acts of wrongdoing, and the hard legal performance of right acts, are of very little value apart from a noble motive. The general truths to which the eighth commandment leads us affect our whole life.

(i.) It teaches us, for instance, the sacred duties of ownership. It exposes the falsity of the plea, "May I not do what I like with my own?" We may notice, in passing, that even in this commandment, Scripture, with its sovereign wisdom, refuses to countenance every form of anarchic communism. It lends no approval to the subversive maxim of M. Proudhon, "*La propriété c'est le vol*," which terrified the world amid the revolutions of 1848. It assumes the existence of property, and sanctions it.* But by thus protecting property it places our possessions directly within the sphere of religious influence. The voice of God gives no sanctity to property acquired by wrong or robbery, by fraud or injustice, by violence or lies. It disavows all unhallowed acquisition, and all base ownership. It condemns the idler who sits down at the feast of life, only to steal from his neighbor, and to get away without paying the reckoning. It condemns the spendthrift and the prodigal who squander on ostentation and appetite the goods which were meant for the glory of God and the blessing of mankind. It warns the selfishly luxurious and the niggardly churlish that it is not *their* bread, but the bread of the hungry which moulders or is wasted

* See Maurice, "The Commandments," p. 17.

in their coffers.* It bases the *privileges* of property on the *obligations* of property. It dwells far more on the duties of the rich and the rights of the poor than on the rights of the rich and the duties of the poor. It warns the rich of the peril of all riches, and of the sin, not indeed of possessing them, but of being possessed by them. It says that covetousness is idolatry, and speaks of "the covetous whom God abhorreth." It says to all of us, No, you may not do what you like with your own; nor, in any but a very transient and secondary sense, is it your own at all. It is lent you, not given; lent you for high purposes, not for mean selfish ends. The wealthy dread the red spectre of Socialism, and talk of "the dangerous classes"; but has it never struck them that they may themselves be the dangerous classes? If their superfluities tempt the passions of the destitute; if but a mere fraction of their inexhaustible stores is given to the perishing; if their extravagances are a challenge to the envious; if their hands lie heavy on the oppressed—then they, far more than the anarchists, are the subverters of society and the torch-bearers of revolution. Danton and Desmoulins and Robespierre were but the instruments, not the causes, of the French Revolution and its Reign of Terror, with

"Its lullaby the Carmagnole, its toy the guillotine."

The causes of that earthquake and eclipse were Louis XIV. with his tyranny, and Louis XV. with his

* "Esurientium panis est qui apud te mucescit, et sitientium potus qui apud te acescit."—ST. AMBROSE.

debaucheries, and Versailles, and Mme. de Pompadour, and Mme. du Barry, and the Œil de Bœuf, and the languid infamies of the Ancien Régime. It is the greedy sweater, and the selfish millionaire, and the corrupt noble, who will be the cause of the subversion hereafter of civilized society, and the shaking to their foundations of all privileged monopolies.

(ii.) But, lastly, the voice of God which uttered from Sinai the eighth commandment teaches also the truth which, if once apprehended, would obliterate all temptation to the transgression of it. For on every one of its sacred pages the Bible endeavors to shift the centre of gravity of man's nature from selfishness to love, from man to God, from time to eternity, from earth to Heaven. Instead of regarding the perishing world and the passing life as the focus of the universe, it bids all life circle round and submit to the attraction of the Sun of Righteousness. All the multitudinous immoralities which spring from the hatred, the lust, the greed upon which God has pronounced His verdict in these three commandments are caused by want of faith. If we seek the true wealth, if our treasure be in Heaven, we shall not have the least temptation to the thousandfold dishonesties caused by that hasting to be rich which shall not be innocent. "A small thing which the righteous hath is better than great riches of the ungodly." * Greed of gain is worship of Mammon, and it is because this is the meanest of all idolatries that the love of money

* Ps. xxxvii. 16; Prov. xvi. 8, x. 22; 1 Tim. v. 6, vi. 18.

is a root of all kinds of evil. The lesson of the eighth commandment is the lesson of Christ, "Set your affections on things above."

This commandment, then, brethren, like the others, gives us abundant room for searching self-examination. In its demand for a scrupulous and an inflexible honesty towards man it includes the necessity of a scrupulous and inflexible honesty towards God. It forbids every form of theft and dishonesty; it forbids extravagance and debt; it forbids betting and gambling; it forbids overreaching and chicanery; it forbids niggardliness and oppression; it forbids idleness and prodigality; it forbids the mean idolatry of Mammon-worship; it forbids all grasping acquisition and greedy ownership; it forbids the sacrilege of robbing God by withholding from Him, and from His house, and from the furtherance of His kingdom that which He gave, and which is our acknowledgment that it is but of His own that we give Him. It shows us that the possession of money is a sacred stewardship, and that to make its accumulation our chief end is a fatal misuse of the gift of life. And when we contemplate even this fragment of the teaching of one only of the Ten Words of God in the Decalogue, instead of despising it, must we not cry in awe and deep humility, not that it is easy to keep, but that in many things we offend all, and that God's commandment is exceeding broad?

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

"Lord, who shall stand in Thy tabernacle? . . . He that backbiteth not with his tongue."—Ps. xv. 1–4.

"The third tongue, let it be cursed, for it hath laid low many corpses."—Ecclus. xxviii. 13 (Syriac).

[The third tongue means the calumnious babbling tongue, so called because its kills three—the calumniator, the listener, and the victim.]

"Make a door and bar for thy mouth, and make for thy words a beam and a weight" (*i.e.*, an accurate balance).—Ecclus. xxviii. 25 (Syriac).

"Our words are set upon never-stopping wheels, rolling on and on unto the pathway of eternity."—Brewster.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

EXOD. xx. 16.

THE three first commandments of the second table —the law of mercy, the law of purity, the law of honesty—primarily forbid evil deeds; and, as interpreted by Christ, and by the conscience which is His "primitive vicegerent," they warn us against the whole range of offences which cluster round, and tend to produce, the overt crimes. The ninth commandment—the law of truthfulness and justice—forbids, in the first instance, malignant perjury, but it is meant further to prohibit all sin in words against our neighbor to the injury of that character and reputation which are dear to him as his life, and dearer than his goods. This sin is at once deadly, and most common, and extremely varied in the forms which it assumes. That is the reason why throughout Scripture —in the Mosaic law, the Psalms, the Proverbs, the prophetic books, and in almost every Epistle of the New Testament—it is pursued with such energy of multiplied and scathing denunciation. It is a shameful thing for men to lie. Even the old Pagan poet

"Who dares think one thing and another tell,
My soul detests him as the gates of hell."

The avowed agnostic can exclaim, "I would rather die than lie." But of all lies the vilest, even where they are half-truths, are the lies of envy and malice aimed at our brother's peace.

1. Truly it is a deadly, an execrable, an inveterate offender who stands at the bar to-day; and it seems as if the sword of the Spirit smites his hydra-heads in vain. Here is one description of slanderers three thousand years ago: "There is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues have they used deceit; their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Destruction and misery are in their ways." * Here is another, two thousand years old: "Curse the whisperer and double-tongued, for such have destroyed many that were at peace. The stroke of the whip maketh marks in the flesh; but the stroke of the tongue breaketh the bones. Many have fallen by the sword, but not so many as have fallen by the tongue. . . . Such as forsake the Lord shall fall into it; and it shall burn in them, and not be quenched; it shall be sent unto them as a lion, and devour them as a leopard." † And here is yet another, written more than eighteen hundred years ago by the brother of our Lord: "The tongue is a fire; the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which

* Ps. v. 9, cxl. 3; Rom. iii. 13–16.
† Eccles. xxviii. 13–23.

defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things, and things in the sea is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind; but the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, full of deadly poison." *

2. In speaking of the sixth commandment, I showed you that language, in the ugly exuberance of its words to express the many forms of hatred, bore witness to the prevalence of that sin; nor is it otherwise with the disastrous multiplicity of terms which express the varieties of malice as it finds vent in malignant utterance. Calumny, slander, misrepresentation, vituperation, contumely, insult, scurrility, railing, detraction, whispering, backbiting, false witness, depreciation, vilification, insinuation, innuendo, abuse, tattle, insolence, obloquy, sneering, taunting, jibes, jeers, personalities, defamation, libel, satire, sarcasm, lampoon, censoriousness, slashing criticism, pasquinade, tale-bearing, malevolent spitefulness, evil surmisings, attributing motives, the base gossip of busybodies—these, and I know not how many more expressions, show how extraordinarily prolific is this language of the devil. For the devil's language it is, though it has been so readily and perfectly mastered by men. It is a universal language. Millions delight in it; thousands live by it, revel in it, build their reputation upon it, rely on it as the poisonous spice which makes their conversation or their writings tell.

* James iii. 1–18.

And for this mean price they sell whatever shred of nobleness can still be left in souls given up to envy, hatred, and lies.

3. Let us glance at some of these offences against the ninth commandment, that we may, if possible, be brought to see their detestable hideousness. Let us make an effort to plead an absolute "not guilty" to the sweeping exclamation of David, "I said in my haste, All men are liars." For all liars are, with murderers and adulterers, excluded from the kingdom of God.

4. We will begin with calumny and slander. This use of falsehood to wound and injure others has its roots in the most venomous element of human life. If in murder, lust, and theft we see that man has in him the elements of the tiger and the ape, these sins of the tongue have a kinship even more frightful. They ally man, as Scripture tells us, to the serpent and the devil. The tongue of the liar is like the forked flickering tongue of the viper. "Adders' poison," says the Psalmist, "is under their lips." "Their wine," says the Book of Deuteronomy, "is the poison of dragons and the cruel venom of asps." "Ye are of your father the devil," said Christ to the slanderous Pharisees, "for he is a liar and the father of it." Slanderers are often proud of themselves; for pride is one of the characteristics of that spirit of evil whose very name of devil—διάβολος—means "slanderer." And companionship, as well as the commonness, lucrativeness, and universal condonation of their crime,

often adds to the smooth self-complacency of these offenders. Yet no slimy trail over the surface of existence is more venomous than that left over wellnigh every leaf of the tree of human life by these whom the poet rightly calls

"Men-slugs and human serpentry."

5. The seeds of slander which are being daily flung broadcast are infinitely prolific. Like nettle-seed, "they need no digging." They fall into the contaminated furrows of minds greedy for such produce. That is why calumny grows and multiplies with such millionfold increase. "Calumny, sir!"—it is from no solemn treatise that I take the words, but from the gay and sparkling comedy—"Calumny, sir! you hardly know what you are despising! I have seen the most respectable people almost overwhelmed by it. Believe me, there is no sort of wickedness, no horror, no absurd talk you cannot make idlers believe in if you set the right way about it. First a little humming sound, skimming the ground, like a swallow before a storm, *pianissimo*, *pianissimo*, murmuring and buzzing and spreading the poison as it goes. A breath catches it up; *piano*, *piano*, it glides into your ear adroitly. The harm is done; it takes root; it climbs; it travels, and *rinforzando* from mouth to mouth it travels like the devil. Then all at once, you hardly know how, you see it raising its head, hissing, swelling itself out, growing monstrous under your very eyes. It rises, takes its flight, whirls round

you, clutches you, drags you along, bursts forth and thunders, and becomes, Heaven help us, a general shriek, *crescendo*—a universal chorus of hatred and proscription." *

6. Most calumny is deadly in intention; it is *meant* to blast and destroy. "The ungodly bend their bow, and make ready their arrows within the quiver, that they may privily shoot at them that are true of heart." And among themselves they give their reason for doing so with all the frankness of the villains in the Book of Wisdom. "Let us lie in wait for the righteous, because he is not for our turn, and is clean contrary to our doings; he upbraideth us, and objecteth to our infamy."† Each generation in turn fails to see that this hatred of the good by the bad, evincing itself by savage deeds or stinging words, is part of the normal history of the world. This depreciation, this holding up to contempt and ridicule by anonymous railers, is part of the tribute which vice pays to virtue. In old days men murdered the prophets, and shed the innocent blood; in these they slay by slander. In all ages, cynics, worldlings, envious rivals, and those who hate the righteous, sharpen their tongues like a razor, to wound the honest reputations of those whom they count their enemies. A man has been called upon by his duty to take an active part among his fellows, and though he has never desired or done anything but good, there are many who will

* Beaumarchais, "Barber of Seville."
† Wisdom, ii. 10–24.

pursue him for half a century with "hurricanes of immeasurable abuse." He can say nothing true; he can do nothing right; his name is as a signal for the hiss of every form of religious hatred, of worldly malice, of interested vice. Even a literary spite is enough. One of the gentlest and oldest of living poets has written thus of malignant critics:

> "Rich in the caustic epithets that sting,
> The venom-vitriol malice loves to fling;
> His pen—a feathered fang at hate's command,
> His ink—the product of his poison-gland.
> Is this the critic? Call him not a snake,
> This noxious creature, for the reptile's sake." *

But when to this thin hatred of literary spite is added the fury of theological rancor, even the simple begin to be taken in, and to think that the man who concentrates upon himself so many animosities must be very bad. They forget that this abuse has happened in its worst forms to all the best men whom the world has ever seen. They forget that it nearly drove the Psalmist to desperation; that it made the meek and holy Jeremiah all but curse the day of his birth; that it wrapped all the prophets in its sulphurous storm; that it told John the Baptist that he had a devil; that it called the Lord Jesus Himself a glutton, a wine-bibber, a deceiver, a Samaritan, a traitor, and a demoniac; that it flung its poisoned robe over the life and career of St Paul; that throughout the Pagan world it made the name Christian a synonym of malefactor;

* Dr. Oliver W. Holmes.

that it drove St. Jerome from Rome; that it still raves against the names of Martin Luther and Oliver Cromwell; that it raged against Savonarola; that it almost broke the gentle heart of Tillotson; that it did its best to blast and blacken the characters of those saints of God, John Wesley and George Whitefield; that, in the form of party spite, it incessantly assailed the names of Frederic Maurice, and Charles Kingsley, and Archbishop Tait, and vexed with religious malignity the very deathbed of Arthur Stanley. In these days, as in all days, a man is hardly worth his salt—he can hardly be said to have taken a brave and open part in the great Armageddon-battle of good against evil, if he have not been fiercely railed at alike by the secular and the religious press. John Bunyan saw with keen insight, and describes in plain Saxon, the language always used to Christian and Faithful in Vanity Fair by those who regard them as disturbers of their trade. On the testimony of Mr. Envy, the jury under my Lord Hategood unanimously brought in Faithful, guilty. "I see clearly that this man is a heretic," said Mr. Blindman. "Then said Mr. No-good, 'Away with such a fellow from the earth.' 'Aye,' said Mr. Malice, 'for I hate the very looks of him.' Then said Mr. Love-lust, 'I could never endure him.' 'Nor I,' said Mr. Live-loose, 'for he would always be condemning my way.' 'Hang him, hang him,' said Mr. Heady. 'A sorry scrub,' said Mr. High-mind. 'My heart riseth against him,' said Mr. Enmity. 'He is a rogue,' said Mr. Liar. 'Hanging is too good for

him,' said Mr. Cruelty. 'Let us despatch him out of the way,' said Mr. Hatelight. Then said Mr. Implacable, 'Might I have all the world given me, I could not be reconciled to him.'" So they brought him out, scourged him, buffeted him, lanced his flesh with knives, stoned him, pricked him with their swords, and, last of all, burned him to ashes at the stake. That was the end of Faithful in Vanity Fair; and something very like it is the usual end of all who, in this day, or in any day, follow his high example, and boldly rebuke falsehood and vice, whether in Church or State. Sleek men, who make an idol of their popularity, find it convenient to forget this, but did not Christ enshrine among His beatitudes the beatitude of malediction? Said He not, "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake"? And of this at least we may be sure, that it is far better to hear the daily lies of a hundred slanderers than have one hour of their base spirit, or one guinea of their abhorrent gains. For these would-be murderers of reputation—though "no ugly spot of blood tells the tragedy"—are so little free from blood-guiltiness, that I look on the life of many a felon as white beside theirs. The weapons of the detractor may seem less brutal than the bludgeon of the murderer, but a murder may be all the more execrable because it is committed by a refined gentleman. The Borgias were none the less guilty because they committed their murders "with drugged

wine and poisoned gloves"; nor are those liars by profession much better, who would fain kill men's characters by the subtle tophana-glass of polished lies.

7. But if there be some men and women whose *métier* it is, in social, political, religious, and literary circles, to stab in the back those whom they have selected for the honor of their hatred, much mischief is done in all ranks by mere vacuity of mind, which requires a thrill of malignity to stir its jaded monotony. Misrepresentation is so easy and so telling! Is a man earnest? You can excuse your own selfish apathy by calling him a "fussy meddler," an "Utopian enthusiast." Is he active in good works? Claim the meed of modesty for your own sloth by dubbing him noisy, pushing, self-advertising; then every lazy settler on his lees will congratulate himself on his own superiority. Does a man show deep feeling? Call him morbid, histrionic, hysterical, lachrymose. Is he religious? Stab him with the name of hypocrite. Does he boldly rebuke vice? Hold him up to scorn as an unpractical charlatan and an intemperate Pharisee. Does he long for the diminution of some horrible public temptation? Brand him a faddist and a fanatic. All this is so effective! And, then, any fool can do it. It's as easy as lying; and if you do it in print you can get guineas by it, and a reputation for smartness. If a man have earned distinction by honest labors, how delightful for some unscrupulous nobody, safe from reprisals in the disdain of those

whom he assails, to assert a cheap superiority, and to shout his attacks till they are reverberated by every idle echo in the land! There are men whose whole stock-in-trade has consisted in the elaboration of half a dozen insolent epigrams. These men are a godsend to tenth-rate tattlers. Let the name of a man be mentioned, and their one idea is to ask, "Oh, did you hear what this newspaper, or that wit, said of him?" And then, out it comes at once—the malicious witticism or the calumnious epigram. The society of such persons is about the most degrading possible.

> "At every word a reputation dies."

As name after name is mentioned—and among empty natures there is little talk except personal talk—they exult to check all recognition of merit; to "damn with faint praise"; to indulge in expressively malignant silence; to exude "precious balms which break the head"; to just hint a fault and hesitate dislike; to put quite another gloss on a fine action; to hide a malicious meaning under fair speech; to interpose a "but"; to hint "they could an' if they would"; to mix ostensible kisses with a few private thrusts under the fifth rib;

> "To help the half-brained dwarf society,
> To fit low motives unto noble deeds,
> To fix all doubt upon the darker side."

Of such people Solomon says that "they cannot sleep unless they have done some mischief, and their

sleep is taken away unless they have caused some to fall." They

> "Rage like a fire among the noblest names,
> Polluting, and imputing their whole selves,
> Defaming and defacing, till they leave
> Not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad clean."

Oh, my soul, enter not into their secret; to their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united!

8. I do not speak with any hope of stemming the muddy waves of malignity which, like the tide on the coast of Lancashire, are "always shallow, yet always just high enough to drown." But I wish that I could show to all *Christians* whom these words reach how absolutely un-Christian and anti-Christian is every form of this sin of false witness against our neighbor: how it is a sin of hell, and turns earth into a hell, and drowns every soul which delights therein in destruction and perdition. All the sins against which the Ten Commandments are directed are sins against the community as well as against the individual. One of the evils of a diffused spirit of scandal-mongering is that it corrupts the mind of the nation, fills it with garbage and suspicion, unfits it for lofty aims and generous estimates. The prevalence of this vice has been the invariable sign of a corrupt and decadent nationality. A nation which delights in backbiters becomes of necessity a degenerate and miserable nation.* A race of tattlers, eager to learn about every

* Aug. "Conf." x. 3; Greg. Naz. "Orat." i., *οὐδὲν οὕτως ἡδὺ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὡς το λαλεῖν τὰ ἀλλότρια.* See Leighton, Works, iii. 164.

one else's life, is sluggish in the correction of its own. We become base if we take an interest in base things. The curse of Heaven is upon whosoever *loveth* as well as whosoever maketh a lie. How noble is the touch of insight in the "Inferno," where Dante, for a moment unworthy of himself, stops to listen to the mutual rabid abuse of Simon, and Adam of Brescia; and Virgil says to him, "Now keep looking a little longer, and I quarrel with thee." At those words of reproof a burning blush of shame covers Dante's cheeks, and he is speechless; but his guide forgives him with the warning that the wish to listen to such banalities is a base wish.* When any one feels a fascination in cruel words, hateful injustice, slashing articles, mordant satire, pitiless sarcasm, he is encouraging the most viperous part of his nature, and pandering in his turn to the moral degeneracy which stimulates his own diseased appetite. And when we realize this, who can think without misgiving of much of the reading which is supplied by the English and American press, because it is thirsted for by the English and American people? We may regret that, in days of daily, almost hourly journalism, when anybody thinks himself able to pronounce *ex cathedrâ* opinions on his neighbors, millions delight in what Mr. Lowell called "the stagnant goose-pond of village gossip." But though such draughts are ignoble and unwholesome,

The Vulg. version of Prov. xx. 3, is "Honor est homini qui separat a contentionibus: omnes autem stulti miscentur contumeliis."

* Dante, "Inf." xxx. 130–148.

they are not such poison as is provided in oceans of slander. It is one of the crimes of the spirit of malice that it turns society into a vast Dionysius' ear, where a myriad greedy, selfish listeners are waiting day and night to catch every passing sound, and the least whisper reverberates in thunder. Oh, may English society never become like that base and stolid creature whom Holbein depicts with a demon seated upon his shoulder—a demon who wears a leer of contempt on his wicked face, and blows the bellows of base gossip into his victim's expanded ears!

9. I can dwell no longer on the odious sins against which this law of God utters its counterblast; yet, since they are all but universal, let us briefly see how we, as Christians, may struggle to escape them.

First, let us cure ourselves of fondness for mere personal talk, which is so often on the marches of sin. Tittle-tattle is first cousin to lies.

Secondly, let us try to realize the awful force of words, and our responsibility for them. How few think of this! "We know the power of strychnine or arsenic, but not of a word! What undesigned phrases are fatally injurious! What insignificant insects may have a fatal sting! Words, I repeat, are not pulsations of air. Words are things." Yes! and with fatal force they often blast characters and torture souls; and if our words have done this, "the wanton whispers pronounced in secret shall assuredly come back in echoes of thunder and pronounce us guilty of death." We should all perhaps feel a sense of deeper

responsibility if we bore in mind our Lord's warning, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Thirdly, humility would do much to save us. We should be less cruel to others if we were more honest with ourselves. If we considered more the beam in our own eye, we should not so savagely denounce the mote in our brother's eye.

Fourthly, are we not afraid of tormenting by our words our brother for whom Christ died? of lying in watch for the peccadilloes of our brethren and then enhancing and blazoning their guilt? Does the sense of their own demerits never rest like lead on the souls of detractors? Then why do they lay burdens so much heavier on the already burdened souls of their brethren? Have they never read the cry of the poet—

> "'Tis not the babbling of an idle world
> Where praise and censure are at random hurled,
> That can the meanest of my thoughts control,
> Or shake one settled purpose of my soul.
> Free and at large might their wild curses roam,
> If all, alas! if all were well at home." *

Many a man has gone through the world like a helpless St. Sebastian, pierced with the rankling arrows of defamers who were not worthy to tie his shoes. Is not the world miserable enough already, without clouds of human flesh-flies to fret its galled and bleeding wounds?

* Churchill.

"Is it worth while to jostle a brother,
Bearing his load on the rough road of life?
Is it worth while that we jeer at each other,
In blackness of heart that we war to the knife?
God pity us all in our pitiful strife!

"God pity us all as we jostle each other;
God pardon us all for the triumph we feel
When a fellow goes down 'neath his load on the heather,
Pierced to the heart: words are keener than steel,
And mightier far for woe than for weal.

"Were it not well on this brief life's journey,
On over the isthmus, down into the tide,
We give him a fish instead of a serpent
Ere folding the hands to be and abide
For ever and aye in the dust at his side?

"Look at the roses saluting each other;
Look at the herds, all in peace on the plain;
Man, and man only, makes war on his brother,
And laughs in his heart at his peril and pain,
Shamed by the beasts that go down on the plain!

"Is it worth while that we battle to humble
Some poor fellow down in the dust?
God pity us all! Time too soon will tumble
All of us together, like leaves in a gust,
Humbled, indeed, down into the dust." *

Fifthly, whether in Church or State or in ordinary society, let us avoid all distorting and narrowing partisanships. Nothing is so censoriously uncharitable, nothing so meanly and violently prejudiced as this headlong part-taking: "Prejudice is the jaundice of the soul which represents other men and their actions in the color which their own disease puts upon

* Joaquin Miller.

them. Hence all those lying rumors which one party invents to beat down the other. One party reports the other to be all profane and superstitious; and the other retorts its opposite to be all hypocritical; and both suffer from each other's envenomed tongues, and between both truth suffers and charity perishes. For shame, oh Christians! Is this the way to promote God's cause or Christ's kingdom? Doth He or Christ stand in need of your lies? Will ye speak wickedly for God, or talk deceitfully for Him?"* "All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: but if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

Brethren, charity is the one sovereign remedy and antidote for this heinous transgression of injuring our neighbors with false tongues. If you would see detraction in all its leprous ugliness, contrast it with the sovereign beauty, the heavenly lustre of charity as St. Paul depicts it to the Corinthians. Look on that picture—so soft, so radiant, so angelically winning, so bathed in airs of Heaven, so full of enchanting colors; and then look at this picture of calumny, so foul and noisome, so weltering with the venom of every base passion; so lurid with the light of hell, which speaks and can speak no language but that of the devil, whose very name means the slanderer. Look at this haggard demon, and that young and rose-lipped cherubin. Consider those two pictures;

* Bishop Hopkins, Works, i. 584.

and, lest you sink into this devilish spirit, "I beseech you as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of pity, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness; read as little evil as you can; disbelieve it all till proved; even if proved, do not repeat it. Your charity shall cover the multitude of sins. At all costs and whatever happen to you, lay aside all malice, guile, hypocrisies, and all evil-speaking. Entrust your own cause to God, as Christ did. Being reviled, bless; being defamed, forgive. Neither speak malevolently of others, nor listen to such malevolence when it is spoken. And then be very sure that, beyond all power of the devil and his followers to take away, the peace of God shall reign in your hearts, and "the path to Heaven shall lie through Heaven, and all the way to Heaven be Heaven."

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

"What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit I had not known sin, except through the law; for I had not known coveting except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet; but sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—ROM. vii. 7, 24, 25.

"For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth."—ROM. x. 4.

Δέκατος δέ ἐστιν ὁ περὶ ἐνθυμίων ἁπασῶν.—CLEM. ALEX. "Strom." v.

"Theft can be committed by the mind alone without touching anything."—AUL. GELLIUS, xi. 18.

"The precepts of the heart are the most important and essential of all."— EBN EZRA.

"The law of God is so pure and exact a rule, that we cannot come near the perfection of it, and therefore fall under its curse. When we understand it so, that drives us to the Gospel, to seek salvation there." —LEIGHTON.

"Seek to be assured that God is yours. Then whatsoever others possess, you will be sure not to covet it, nor envy them. Those who have most, you will pity if they want Him; and those who have Him, you will have no envy of them for sharing with them, but love them the more. For that infinite love is enough for all that choose Him . . . and those whom He hath first chosen in eternal love."— LEIGHTON.

"The fulfilment of the law is only complete when the heart is sanctified."—OEHLER.

Thou shalt not covet.

EXOD. xx. 17.

THIS is a unique commandment. Search all the laws of all the world, and you will not find one which resembles it. The sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth commandments you will find in all codes, though only as prohibitions of crimes amenable to judicial punishment. The tenth commandment is the complement of all the rest. It shows that God requires of us not only outward virtue, but inward holiness; that He demands in us the sacrifice of the will, from which wicked actions spring; that sinful imaginations are a crime against Him as well as wicked acts. Human laws can only prohibit those crimes of which human eyes can take cognizance; the thoughts of men are beyond their reach. The tyrant can command the outward obedience of his slave; he cannot subdue the fierce rebellion which rages within that slave's heart; he cannot hush the unspoken curses which blight him with the white lightning of their hate. He makes no attempt to order what he is impotent to enforce. The heart of fallen man is naturally a chamber of unclean imagery, like that which horrified the prophet Ezekiel, when

> "His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
> Of alienated Judah."

But it is shrouded in impenetrable darkness; it is hidden in the mysterious depths of that individuality which, in each of us, is an island surrounded by an unvoyageable sea. None can enter, none can even approach it, but that divine Legislator who would fain transform it from a haunt of devils into a sanctuary of God. The command which prohibits not only commission but concupiscence, can be uttered by God alone. And herein the Ten Words of Sinai anticipate the eight beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. The Law says, "Thou shalt not desire"; the Gospel says, "Blessed are the pure in heart."

2. And being thus a divine statute, we see it marked by supreme wisdom and by supreme tenderness.

(i.) The wisdom appears in its insight. It is a commandment pre-eminently spiritual. It cuts at the root of all formalism and of all hypocrisy. It shows us that man is not what he seems to men, but what he is to the eye of God. When Satan appears to Uriel in the "Paradise Lost," he assumes the guise of a stripling cherub,

> "Not of the prime, yet such as in His face
> Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb
> Suitable grace diffused; so well he feigned.
> Under a coronet his flowing hair
> In curls on either cheek played; wings he wore
> Of many a colored plume, sprinkled with gold."

And Uriel, though he is the angel of the sun, is deceived:

"For neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone."

The lesson which the tenth commandment teaches us is that God must be obeyed, not with eye service of men-pleasers, but with singleness of heart. "As he thinketh," says Solomon of the dissembler, "so is he"; but "the Lord knoweth the thoughts." The Pharisees led men to be content with the cleansing of the outside of the cup and of the platter. Yet this law, with its demand for inward sincerity, might have taught them that outward conformities are to God an abomination when they are offered as a substitute for justice, humility, and love. Even the heathen saw that with God nothing avails but heart-obedience. "Wickedness and injustice," says Aristotle, "lie in the intention." * "He," says Juvenal,† "who thinks any silent wickedness within himself, has the guilt of the deed." "It is as base," said Xenocrates, "to send the eyes as it is to send the feet, into the possessions of another." ‡

(ii.) And this command is tender as well as wise, for it is mercifully designed to save us from error. It is not meant to terrify us, but to train. It reveals to us, as with a flash out of eternity, where and how the one work of our life has to be done. It says to us, as the prophet said to Jerusalem, "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be

* Arist. "Rhet." 14. † Juv. "Sat." 13, 28.
‡ Ap. Plutarch, "De Curiositate."

saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" It says with Solomon, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Ah, here is the difficulty! It is easy to be outwardly respectable. It is easy to keep the letter of the commandments. But to obey with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, to keep the law in its entirety without reservation for one bosom sin, to keep it always, in wilful boyhood, in fervid youth, in tempted manhood, in disillusioned age—which of us is thus an upright man and a perfect? Still less is this possible when we have not been faithful in the past. Now this commandment shows us that "there is no sound cure of any disease without the removal of its cause." Can a polluted fountain send forth sweet water? Are good fruits born from a corrupt tree? Ah! brethren, the healing salt must be flung into the bubbling spring, or the streams will be full of death. The roots of the corrupt tree must be dug up, not merely its buds nipped or its branches lopped. To leave off old sins is something, it is much; but it is not enough. We must not only stop sin, but stop the desire to sin. If we should still *like* to sin we are not regenerate. We must die to sin. This is what St. Paul means, when, haunted by the agonies of personal experience, he says again and again, that we must have the true circumcision of the heart; that we must crucify the flesh with its passions and desires; that we must mortify the deeds of the body, mortify our members which are upon the earth, and

among them evil desire, and covetousness which is idolatry, and that for these things the wrath of God cometh on the sons of disobedience. It is this concupiscence, this evil impulse, which must be slain within us by the spirit of Christ. The lust of the flesh, the perversion of our bodily appetites—the lust of the eyes, the vain desires and passions of the mind —the braggart vaunt of life, our Mammon-worship, our selfishness, our arrogance, our vain ambition—these we must deracinate. It is at the root of these that the axe of this commandment is uplifted. Until they are hewn down and cast into the fire, Moses as well as Christ teaches us that we are not converted, we shall not be safe.

3. "Thou shalt not covet." The literal meaning of the commandment is, Thou shalt not, excessively or wrongfully—thou shalt not, unlawfully and irregularly —desire anything which thou canst not innocently and uprightly possess. Perhaps you think, What harm can a mere desire do? What wrong can there be in an airy nothing, an impalpable thought? The answer is twofold. First, that airy nothing, that impalpable desire as you call it, is, with God, a real thing. It is seen in Heaven; it is heard in Heaven; in Heaven it needs forgiveness. And secondly, that thought will be, if dwelt upon, the prolific mother of all sins—it is the cockatrice's egg from which breaks forth the viper and the fiery flying serpent. Guilty longings are the avant-couriers to guilty deeds. Concealed in the guise of a harmless infant, the guilty

curiosity, lingering on the confines of temptation, pushes the wicket-gate ajar; and, when it has done so, it springs into the menacing stature of a giant, and to the secret, timid, blushing apostate, flings wide open the portals of abundant opportunity. What great harm, you say, in a mere guilty look, a mere guilty wish, a mere guilty longing? Well, are they so harmless? Nay, for from these roots of bitterness the grapes of Sodom and the clusters of Gomorrah draw their sap and nourishment. The guilty look of David at Bathsheba from his palace roof, the guilty longing of Achan for the ingot of gold, the guilty desire of Ahab for Naboth's vineyard—did nothing come of them? In the first case, the bad desire led to adultery; in the second to theft; in the third to murder. The sole way to keep free from infinite possibilities of sin is to follow the exhortation of St. James, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded."

4. And not for a moment must we imagine that God, in this commandment, has set us a task which is impossible. It is not in the least impossible if we resist the beginnings of evil, if we vigorously suppress the first risings of evil inclination when it is most easy to suppress them. They cannot be so easily subdued when once they have taken form in act. There are four stages to every deed of wickedness before the deed is done, and at each stage resistance becomes less easy. First comes the film or shadow of an evil thought floating vaguely through the mind. If it be

suffered to stay in the mind unrebuked, there follows complacency in it, and entertainment of it. Then though the law condemns it, and conscience cites the law, the passions rush in and bribe the judgment to give its vote and assent to sin. Then follows that depravation of the will without which defiance of the conscience is impossible; and then, indeed, the evil deed is certain. Happy the man who stops short at the first act of sin; but the second is so much easier than the first that one transgression, but for God's special grace, is certain to become many transgressions; and when the habit of transgression is formed, it becomes ten thousandfold more difficult to break those brazen fetters in which habit binds the guilty body and the guilty soul. He who would win the easiest, the happiest, and the securest victory must win it in the thoughts of the heart.

5. It is on the worldly forms of concupiscence—on the covetousness which is idolatry—that the expansion of the commandment chiefly dwells. It warns us specially against the greed of accumulation, the thirst for gold. Is it not an awful thought that the deadly sin of Judas sprang from greed?—that even an Apostle could be perverted by lust of gain? And have we not fearful proofs in every generation that the love of money is still "a root of all kinds of evil"? Does it not make the heart bleed to think of women rich in a good man's love, of men high in reputation and position, of students eminent in attainment, who even in these few months have been dragged into ruin

by that hasting to be rich which shall not be innocent? And do not nations also need the lesson? Does not England need it? Is there no fear that avarice—the counter-selfishnesses of capital and labor—should fall like the star Wormwood of the Apocalypse, and poison all our streams with deathful bitterness? Is England in no peril from "cut-throat competition"; from selfish luxury in one class and bitter envy in another? Was not this the utter curse and blighting ruin of mediæval Spain? Did not Cortes say to Montezuma, "Send us gold, for we Spaniards have a disease which can only be cured by gold"? "Since first the dominion of men was asserted over the ocean"—with those words a celebrated book begins—"three thrones of mark beyond all others have been set upon its sands—the thrones of Tyre, of Venice, and of England. Of the first of these great powers, only the memory remains; of the second, the ruin; the third, which inherits their greatness, if it forget their example, may be led through prouder eminence to less pitied destruction." *

This commandment says to the England of to-day, Which wilt thou be, the freeman of Christ, or the bond-slave of Mammon? the protector of the world, or its destroyer? the example to the world, or its corruption?—"the evangelist of the world, or its beast of burden?" † Rich thou art beyond all other nations, and art ever becoming more and more rich.

* Ruskin, "Stones of Venice."

† Cardinal Manning.

But "wealth" means weal—means well-being; it does not mean riches. And woe to thee, not weal, if the swollen tide of riches lose itself in the fiery lake of drink, or in the scum of selfish accumulations. If so, thy glory too shall "fade like the Tyrian dye, and moulder like the Venetian palaces." And to myriads of individual Englishmen at this moment, worried by the nervous waste and dazed with the moral intoxication of an insatiable greed; selling honor and honesty and uprightness to get rich; paltering with Eternal God for gold, the tenth commandment says, Oh, seek the true riches! Strive to be rich to God. The secret of thy emancipation is the rediscovery by thee of the true meaning and worth of life, as our Saviour taught it. "Take heed," said Jesus, "and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the multitude of the things that he possesseth."

6. But this commandment teaches something more than contentment. Lovely indeed, and full of happiness, is that virtue.

> "Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?
> O sweet content!
> Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexèd?
> O punishment!
> Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexèd
> To add to golden numbers golden numbers?
> O sweet content!
> O sweet, O sweet content!"

But, after all, content is but the passive form of the most fruitful of all virtues, self-sacrifice. He who has ceased to desire will rejoice also to abstain; he who

hates to hoard with selfish greediness will be eager to give with wise generosity; and he will find that herein is happiness. Agassiz said, "I have no time to get rich." St. Edmund of Canterbury used to leave his money in the window of his staircase, for any one to take who would, and sometimes he would sprinkle dust over it, saying, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Such men empty by filling. The "expulsive power of good affections" leaves no room for meaner passions. The lives of saints "pour silent contempt on gold." And how great is their reward! They are uplifted above the base temptations which surround the toiling and moiling multitudes. St. Paul calls the fifth commandment "the first commandment with promise"; but though the promises be unexpressed, every commandment is a commandment with richest promise. Every obedience is accompanied with its immense beatitude. Love is blessing; purity is heavenliness; honesty is happy confidence; the mastery of the tongue is perfectness; and the tenth commandment, which lies at the root of all the others, combines all their blessedness. Content, self-abnegation, the subdual of concupiscence, means that the soul is satisfied in God. Dissatisfaction is the necessary curse of all worldly life. The soul is too divine a thing to be sold for evil thoughts, which either smoulder away in their own foul fume; or, being fulfilled, afflict the sinners with their emptiness and their retribution. "Vanity of vanities!"—so ends one of the best-known novels of modern days—"which of

us has what he desires, or, having it, is satisfied?" Answer me, children of the world, votaries of self-indulgence, slaves of gold, and confess your misery! Can you leave your souls in this heap of mud? Are you contented with this banquet of husks among the feeding swine? Are you such poor mean beings that it is a sufficient end of life for you to have a balance at your banker's? or have not you, too, heard the sound of harpy wings over your ledgers and your gold? Those harpies are "the gusts of vexatious, fretful, lawless passions; vain and overshadowing; discontented and lamenting; meagre and insane; spirits of wasted energy, and unappeased famine, and unsatisfied hope." *

Contrast with this the peace of one whose passions are subdued, whose heart is given to God! God gives him exactly what the world cannot give—perfect satisfaction. The picture of the world is, "wickedness shall burn like fire; no man shall spare his brother, he shall snatch on the right hand and be hungry, and shall eat on the left hand and not be satisfied." But "the good man is satisfied from himself." The meek shall eat and be satisfied. "They shall be satisfied with the goodness of God's house; and Thou shalt give them to drink of Thy pleasures as out of a river."

* "He who has known the weariness of vain desires, the pitiful, unconquerable coiling and recoiling and self-involved returns of some sickening famine and thirst of heart, has heard from her rock the shriek of the harpy Celaeno, and knows why in the seventh circle of Dante's 'Inferno' the harpies make their nests in the warped branches of the trees, which are the souls of suicides."—RUSKIN.

Covetousness means curse; but he who gives up all for Christ gains all; and he who will lose his life for Christ's sake shall always find it. Not long ago a dying missionary wrote home from Africa, "Tell my family and my friends that I rejoice to have left all for Christ. Were my sacrifice to make again, I would make it again a thousand times. I would not change my lot for all the happiness in the world." Can it be otherwise? The ancient sage, as he looked on the countless appurtenances of luxury, exclaimed, "How many things I do not want!" If we have the Infinite God in our hearts, what else can we desire?

7. Lastly, since this commandment is thus deep and broad, it is not strange that it has wrought memorable effects in the spiritual history of mankind. It has been rightly called "the evangelical commandment." It brought to two men the convictions which have changed the conditions of the Church and of the world. It made St. Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles; it made Luther the herald of the Reformation.

(i.) St. Paul tells us that the day had been when he felt no sense of sin. Sin was dormant in him; it lay like a torpid snake amid the flowers of his self-satisfaction. He was unconscious of resistance to God and alienation from Him. But this commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," detected and evoked and doomed the sin within him. He saw that his accurate legality was the whitewash over a grave; and

that even his persecuting zeal was nothing better than an arrogant and passionate selfishness. And then in this death of sin, Christ found him and made him alive unto God. It changed Saul the furious persecutor into Paul the loving evangelist; Saul the haughty Pharisee into Paul the holy Apostle.

(ii.) Nor less mighty was the work it wrought for Martin Luther. In his days the Church had sunk into concupiscence and covetousness. Multitudes of its priests had

> "Turned atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled
> With lust and violence the house of God."

Their Inquisition, founded in Spain by the most execrable of Popes, made the heavens black with the smoke of burning saints. Their pomp, their pride, their lies, their lecheries, their murders, their insolent usurpations, their arrogant self-assertion, their insatiable thirst for gold, stank in the nostrils of the world, while all the time they professed to lord it over God's heritage, and to hold exclusively in their polluted hands the keys of Heaven and of Hell. "In the city of Rome dwelt a man who called himself the Vicar of Christ. From this man went forth the offer to the people of Europe of remission of sins to be sold for a price, the money to be used for the building of a church, the church of the sacred city. To Pope Leo X., the liveliest of jokers, the most subtle of intriguers, this seemed as reasonable a way of raising funds for a church as any other. To one man it was not a

jest, but an abomination and a blasphemy. One man, when the offer of absolution was being sold by priests, thundered in their ears and in the ears of Europe, 'Thy money perish with thee!' The covetousness, the concupiscence, the evil desire of his own heart had been revealed to him by the God who condemns it. He had found that, alike for teachers and scholars, there is a deliverance from covetousness, a union with God in Him who gave Himself up for the world. The covetousness of a Church which was the witness for Christ's sacrifice utterly appalled him. Could it mean anything but this, that the Church was denying Christ, was selling herself to His enemy? It was a time of great kings, of wonderful politicians. And this voice, coming from a monk knowing only the cloister and the college, produced such a national movement as neither kings nor priests could quell. For men knew in their inmost hearts that covetousness was eating up Christendom, that the kings were enslaved to it, that the priests were cherishing it under divine titles; that no maxims of ethics, no ridicule of wits, no insurrection of peasants could put it down. Only in the name of the Lord God could it be encountered; only He could raise His Church out of the pit which His ministers had dug for it." * The law which forbids covetousness led Luther, as it had led Paul, to Christ. "This German beast," said Leo X. of him, "cares nothing for gold." No! and because he did not, he died in utter poverty, but he has

* Maurice, "The Ten Commandments."

led myriads of men to set their affections, as he did, on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

8. Ah! may we learn the lesson as a nation, as a Church, in our individual hearts! So only can we be delivered from the self-will, which in a nation shows itself in social godlessness, in deep-seated corruption, in adultery and drunkenness and fraud; which in a Church is manifested by will-worship, by bitter partisanship, by base intrigues; which in a society creates an atmosphere of gossip, scandal, and spite; which in each individual is a source of fretful egotism, the claims of an exaggerated self-importance, the abject passion for and admiration of wealth. Only Christ can deliver us, and the end of all the commandments, and of this commandment most of all, is Christ.

"Him first, Him last, Him midst, and without end."

THOU SHALT NOT.

Thou shalt not.

EXOD. xx. 4.

ALL the commandments except two are prohibitions, not precepts; they forbid, they do not enjoin. And this might be made an objection to their asserted perfectness. Even virtue, it might be said, cannot consist of negations; much less can holiness. A man is not necessarily virtuous because he abstains from flagrant violations of law. A man might be a hermit in the wilderness, where he *could* not kill, or steal, or lie, and yet be entirely devoid of charity, honesty, and truth. Virtue, as the Pagan moralist said, is fairer than the morning and the evening star; but he said also that it is a "practical habit, acquired by doing virtuous acts." It would be a pale star if it meant nothing but abstention from deeds of wrong. How much more is this true of holiness! The standard of holiness is so transcendently loftier than that of virtue, that the word virtue does not occur once in the Old Testament, and only twice in a very subordinate manner in the New. How much more, then, would holiness, which fills the burning and shining spirits around God's throne, be a cold and lack-lustre thing, were it merely bound by "Thou shalt not."

This objection against the perfectness of God's Ten Words as our rule in life is at once cancelled by our Lord's expansion of them to every look, and impulse, and innermost desire. But even then we do not see why the Commandments should not have run directly, "Be kind, be pure, be honest, be truthful, be contented;" instead of "Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not lie, thou shalt not covet."

2. The reason why the fourth and fifth commandments are positive in form is because they do not run counter to our appetites. The other commandments are prohibitions, because, in every instance, there is a desire, a tendency, a temptation of our fallen nature, to break them. The negative in the commandments is the most terrible commentary on the fall of man.

3. My friends, let us not merely embalm this truth as the mummy of a dead doctrine, and set it up in the museum of theology, but look at it as a terrible fact of which we must take account. Woe unto us if we do not take account of it in the whole practical conduct of our lives! Call it "concupiscence," call it "evil passion," call it "the desires of the flesh and of the mind," call it what you will—it remains true that the "carnal mind" is enmity against God.

4. Let us refuse to entangle ourselves here in theological extremes and theological technicalities. The Decalogue simply assumes, and places us face to face with, an ugly fact of our human nature. One of the Seven Wise Men of Greece left it as the result of his

experience, that "most men are bad." Modify the saying as you will, it represents a frightful reality. We cannot refute what every source of our knowledge verifies. Look at Scripture; look at history; look at experience; look at your own hearts. In Scripture the first man and the first woman break God's express command, eat the forbidden fruit, and bring

> "Death into the world, and all our woe,
> With loss of Eden."

Of the two first children born into the world, the elder becomes a branded murderer; the second welters in his blood, a murdered victim. So wretched, so fallen, does the race become that it repented the Eternal that He had made man upon the earth, and it grieved Him in His heart. On the first page of Holy Writ we have the Fall; on the second, the Deluge; on the last—four thousand years later—the doom of dogs and sorcerers and murderers. One man and his family are saved from the Deluge; but hardly have its lustral waters ebbed when that man becomes the first drunkard, and his son and his grandson show themselves utterly detestable. "There is no man that sinneth not," says Scripture. "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil and madness." We turn to history, does it ratify these sweeping generalizations of Scripture? Alas! how many of its pages are foul with lust and rapine; how many are glued together with blood! "Truly it seems to me," says the most eloquent of living writers, "as I gather

in my mind the evidences of insane religion, degraded art, merciless war, sullen toil, detestable pleasure, and vain or vile hope, in which the nations of the world have lived, since first they bear record of themselves—it seems to me, I say, as if the race were still half serpent, not extricated yet from its clay—a lacertine brood of bitterness, the glory of it emaciate with cruel hunger, and blotted with venomous stain; and the track of it on the leaf a glittering slime, in the sand a useless furrow."

We turn to experience, and every man of large heart, beginning life with glowing faith in human nature, finds round him every day such meanness, such malice, such an ocean of what is despicable, that it requires the aid of all his religion to prevent him from saying,

"However we brave it out, we men are a little breed."

Even good men are heart-stricken at their own inward vileness. When Grotius was on his deathbed they read him the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, and he groaned, "I am that Publican." When John Randolph, the American orator, lay dying, he said to his servant, "Bring me a card." "What shall I do with it?" "Write on one side, John Randolph; on the other, Remorse. Put it into your pocket: and when you want to know what best expresses the soul of John Randolph, take it out and look at it." "My life has been a failure," said a great man ere he died. How many myriads have thought

and felt the same! We look into our own hearts to see if we differ in any respect from the great multitude. Alas! we see that they are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; that "our tears want washing, and our repentance needs to be repented" of. And then we see why the Ten Commandments are prohibitions, not precepts. They are so to save us from becoming what so many become, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, lovers of money, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. They are to put us on our guard that the attitude of our minds must be watchfulness; not the morbid terror of the half-dazed ascetic, but the manly alertness of the sentinel, conscious of his foe. Each of God's "Thou shalt not" is to the good man as a cannon placed against the creeping glide or tiger-leap of some evil passion. They remind him that he must fight manfully under the banner of the Eternal Saviour, whose he is and whom he serves.

5. "Thou shalt NOT." That "not" should remind us that we are warned against sin, by the terrible voice of God's most just judgment; warned against it, because that way madness lies, and ruin and misery. That "everlasting No" of God should be to us as the flaming sword of a cherub, to keep us from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It should be a ray out of eternity to disenchant our earthly senses from the foul glamour of the world, the flesh, and the devil. But now, if there be this significance of warning in the "NOT," is there no significance of

blessing and helpfulness, as well as of warning, in the "THOU"?

It is not the ordinary form of human codes. So far as I know, it is peculiar to this. It is the more remarkable, because, according to the universal tendency of ancient life—the State, the nation, the community was everything; the individual, in comparison, nothing. It was in the Gospel that men first learnt to realize the grandeur and preciousness of the individual soul; it was the Gospel which took the brief beatings of the heart and added to them infinitude. Yet even at Sinai men were taught that, in the ultimate deeps of personality, there remain "but two certain and self-luminous entities"—the soul and God. The thunders rolled, the lightnings flamed, the hills trembled, the voice of the trumpet sounded long and loud, clouds and darkness were about Him, when, with ten thousands of His saints, the Eternal on Sinai manifested Himself to the chosen people, which thronged and trembled in the valleys underneath: but, when the Voice spoke—though it spake to the nation, though it spake through the nation to all mankind, even to the countless generations yet unborn—it yet addressed you, and you, and me. To the youngest boy in the choir, God was speaking; to the oldest man in the congregation; the richest, the poorest; the noblest, the most obscure; the greatest, the most insignificant. Christ said, "I have a MESSAGE to thee." There could be no possibility of asking to which of all us? The answer is, "I have a

message from God to THEE." Carved with God's own finger on the granite bases of all morality stands that eternal "thou." The thunder throbbed to each individual ear; the levin flashed its menace on each separate eye. Thou, and thou, and thou; thou, in every generation of the past; thou, every soul which shall be born into the world; thou, each man and woman and boy and girl here, God says to thee, "I have called thee by thy name"; and I, thy God, thy Maker, the Lord of thy life, and of all the worlds, say to thee—THOU shalt NOT worship idols; THOU shalt not kill; THOU shalt not steal; THOU shalt not be impure; THOU shalt not lie.

6. Why, then, was this?

(i.) It was, first, to show that the commandment was as absolutely addressed to us as though there were no living soul beside: it was to prevent any man from trying to do what men are ever trying to do, to hide themselves behind the multitude; to follow the multitude to do evil; to say, "I am no worse than my neighbors"; to say, "Every one does it, and why should not I?"—to make callous custom an excuse for guilty acquiescence. "When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth." The sanction of the multitude makes no difference to the sin; it will make no difference to the penalty. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished." * However numerous the tares are in the field, though they make it all yellow like the blight-

* Prov. xi. 21; Is. viii. 9.

ing charlock, all red like the fœtid poppy, they shall be gathered in bundles for the burning. Society? Will the applause of society and its newspapers plead condonation for your selfishness and lust? The Press? Will the unanimity of all that is godless and cynical in the press succeed in shielding the sinner? Ay, just as much as it will succeed in blackening the saint. Dare I read you—I hardly dare—in their coarse vigor, a few lines of a ballad aimed at barren custom and blank compromise? It describes the death of a man, whom it calls Tomlinson, of Berkeley Square, whose life has never risen above the average; who, on the strength of custom, has made that compromise with Mammon, that league with death, that covenant with hell, to which we all are tempted. He dies. A spirit grasps him by the hair, and drags him before St. Peter, who bids him stand up and say what good he has ever done in his lifetime. He refers to his priest, but St. Peter answers,

> "'Though we called your friend from his bed this night, he could not speak for you;
> For the race is run by one and one, and never by two and two.'"

Then he answers that he had read this, and thought that.

> "And Peter twirled the jangling keys in weariness and wrath:
> 'Ye have read, ye have heard, ye have thought,' he said,
> 'and the tale is yet to run;
> By the worth of the body that once ye had, give answer—
> What ha' ye done?

O none may reach by hired speech of neighbor, priest, and kin,
Through borrowed deed to God's good meed that lies so fair within.'"

He is taken to the place of doom; but he has been one of those shabby, neutral creatures, facing both ways, Laodiceans—lukewarm, neither cold nor hot; respectable well-to-do sinners, who were neither for God nor for His enemies, but only for their wretched, greedy, money-loving selves, who, in Dante's "Inferno," are chased round the outermost limbo of hell, but spurned even thence. So when the fiends have tested his soul—

"Back they came with the tattered Thing, as children after play,
And they said: 'The soul that he got from God he has bartered clean away.
We have threshed a stook of print and book, and winnowed a chattering wind
And many a soul wherefrom he stole, but his we cannot find.'"

And so, as having no soul of his own, the Evil One says to him:

"'Go back to Earth with a lip unsealed—go back with an open eye,
And carry my word to the Sons of Men or ever ye come to die:
That the sin they do by two and two, they must pay for one by one—
And . . . the God that you took from a printed book be with you, Tomlinson!'"

(ii.) We have seen that God said, "THOU shalt not," that we might understand His commands to be indi-

vidual. He did it also to show that they are exceptionless.

Men are invariably saying, "I pray Thee have *me* excused; my passions were so strong; my temptations were so exceptional." In vain, in vain! God said, "*Thou* shalt not"; the message was to thee; thou hadst nothing to do with what others did or did not. God did not ask thee to guide thyself by what all society did, or all its papers approved, but by His exceptionless, eternal law. "Oh, but," says another, "I was a genius; I had all the nervous impulses, the passionate sensibility, the burning temperament of genius. You cannot possibly put me under such tame rules." In vain, in vain! The shining faces look down upon him, wondering he could ever have supposed that the pitiful little thing which he calls his genius exempted him from the "Thou" of Sinai. "Oh, but I was a king, a conqueror, a statesman! how could I have carried out my great schemes if I had attended to these petty rules?" Or, "I was a nobleman, a man of distinction; You cannot possibly condemn a person of quality like me with all this *canaille*, these masses, this proletariat." Or, "I was a wit and a brilliant journalist, and how could I be expected to get my weekly guineas as a slashing critic if I did not rail and jibe, and sneer, and slander, and defend the vested interests of wrong?" Or, "I was a man of refinement, a thinker, a philosopher; men are praising my virtues and merits even now." In vain, in vain! Empty in the ears of Heaven, as the

myriad chirpings of the grasshoppers! Oh conqueror, oh poet, oh aristocrat, oh journalist, oh fine thinker, who wast thou in the unspeakable littleness which thou tookst for greatness, to set thyself above the moral law of God? Thy greatness, forsooth! what was it more than one insect crawling upon another's back? Thy genius, what was it but the leap of a cricket, or the soaring of a fly? Who told thee in thine infinite insignificance that God had His favorites, whom he exempted from His laws, and that thou wast one of them? That fire of Sinai has scorched the eagle wings of mighty nations; shall such a gilded moth as thou escape its flames? That earthquake voice has rocked the foundations of empires into indistinguishable ruin; shall its impatience spare thy hut of sand?

(iii.) "THOU shalt not." It warns us, then, that God's Voice from Sinai was individual, and spake to each: that it was also exceptionless, mercilessly inexorable, and spake to all alike. But the "Thou shalt not" also has a most tender, loving, and merciful side. It shows that each soul of man is precious in God's sight, of which He gave the inconceivable proof in that for each sinful soul He sent His Son to die. If the "Thou" thus spoken may well terrify the sinner, it may also well inspire the saint. Let all the world be against him; all its witty liars; all its malignant baseness; all its millionaire magnificence; all its omnipotent vested interests in wrong: what does it matter? "God is the only final public opinion."

"One with God is always in a majority." Neither in sorrow nor amid persecution, nor when His face seems utterly hidden, does God ever forget or forsake us. The "Thou" of God has in it the accent, not of wrath—for His prohibitions are in mercy, not in menace—but of a Father's love. It tells us, in the tender words of Christ, that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. It tells us that not a sparrow falls without God's will, and we are of more value than many sparrows. It tells us that an Eye of Love looks down upon us from the infinite azure. It says to us, "I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye few of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." It tells us that the God of the race is the God of the individual; the God of all is the God of each; that God not only loves us in the aggregate, but loves me in my separate insignificance. Yes, Christ not only died for all, but died for me, amid all my failure and my sin. Brethren, will you think of some of these lessons when there rings in your ear the mercy and the menace of Sinai—the "THOU shalt NOT" of your Father and your God?

NOTE ON THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

The clause annexed to the second commandment at first sight presents formidable difficulties. I have no space here to enter fully into the questions involved in it, but perhaps the following suggestions may prove helpful.

I. "*I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.*"

The Rabbis rightly observe that only in the first two commandments does God speak in the first person ("Maccoth," 24, 1); in the others in the third. The reason which they assign—that the terror experienced by Israel was so great as to necessitate the mediatorship of Moses for the delivery of the others—is contrary to Scripture (Ex. xx. 1, 19; Deut. iv. 13, 14).

The expression, "a jealous God" (El Qannāh), is only found here and in Ex. xxxiv. 14, Deut. iv. 24, v. 9, vi. 15; but "jealousy" is attributed to God also in Deut. xxix. 19, 20; Ps. lxxix. 5; comp. Zech. i. 14, viii. 2; Joel ii. 18; Ps. lxxviii. 58.

It means, "I am a God very tender of my honor and of my right."

The word might also be rendered "zealous" (*Eifervoll*, De Wette), as in Is. ix. 7; Ezek. v. 13 (comp. Num. xxv. 11, 13). It is rendered in the Septuagint, Θέος ζηλωτής; in the Vulgate, *fortis Zelotes*. Our God is, in this sense, a consuming fire. Of course the expression belongs to that

form of speech which is called *anthropopathy—i. e.*, the attribution to God of human passions, though He is a Being without body, parts, or passions—by which alone His will can be explained to men. What is meant is that God's love for man so grieves Him when He sees man falling into idolatry, that (as Maimonides observes) He is called the "enemy," the "adversary," and the "antagonist" of idolaters alone. The schoolmen explain the words to mean not what God will do, but what men *deserve*. Bishop Andrewes says, "It is only meant that God will do as men will do who have like affections." "He is the Lord and Husband of His people, and idolatry is therefore spiritual adultery."—LEIGHTON.

II. "*And visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me.*"

There is a twofold difficulty about these words.*

(1) First, because they wear the semblance of arbitrary injustice; (2) secondly, because they seem directly to contradict other passages of Scripture.

As to the first, we may observe—

(i.) That in ancient days *the corporate unity of families and states* was realized far more intensely than is the case in the modern growth of individualism. The law of corporate retribution offers fewer difficulties, and as seen in

* Leighton rests content with the remark, "God may justly give the children over to the sins of their parents, His grace being free, and so, not being bound to His creatures to furnish grace but where He wills, they go on in the sins of their fathers." This is the wholly unsatisfactory line taken also by Grotius ("De Jure Belli," ii. 593), "God threatens . . . to visit the impiety of the fathers upon the children; but He has right and dominion both over our property and our lives." The moral sense rejects this view. Infinite power can never give condonation to moral injustice.

families is the commonest theme of Greek tragedy. This will be illustrated by the following remarks of Sir. H. Maine:

"If the community sins, its guilt is much more than the sum of the offences committed by its members; the crime is a corporate act, and extends by its consequences to many more persons than have shared in its actual perpetration. *If, on the other hand, the individual is conspicuously guilty*, his kinsfolk, his tribesmen, or his fellow-citizens suffer with him, and sometimes for him. It thus seems that the ideas of moral responsibility and retribution often seem to be more clearly realized at ancient than at more advanced periods, for as the family group is immortal, and its liability to punishment indefinite, the primitive mind is not perplexed by the question which becomes troublesome as soon as the individual is conceived as altogether separate from his group." Hence the early Greek notion of an inherited curse: "*The bequest, received by his posterity from the original criminal, was not a liability to punishment, but a liability to the commission of fresh offences which drew with them a condign retribution; and thus the responsibility of the family was reconciled with the newer phase of thought which limited the consequences of the crime to the actual delinquent.*"—MAINE, "Ancient Law," pp. 126, 129.*

(ii.) Since God is just, and since God is love, "we must not hereby understand that God will *arbitrarily* inflict undeserved pains upon the children of bad men for the faults of their ancestors; for God doth expressly disclaim such kind of proceeding."—BARROW.

* Hence Cicero says ("Ad Brut." Ep. 15), "In qua videtur illud esse crudele, quod ad liberos, qui nihil meruerunt, poena pervenit sed id et antiquum est et omnium civitatum."

(iii.) "Certain it is that God never visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children with *eternal* punishment."—Bishop Hopkins.

(iv.) The difficulty (as we have said) cannot be solved by any mere appeal to God's omnipotent power. The afflictions and punishment of the innocent for sins which they did not commit, and for which they could not have been responsible, would be a dishonor to God's justice.

(v.) Warburton thought that the principle of visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children was only temporarily laid down for an uncivilized people, "as a surrogate for the doctrine of immortality," and subsequently repealed by Jeremiah (xxxi. 29–33) and Ezekiel (xviii.). But how can we suppose, asks Kalisch, that a prophet should attempt to abolish a moral law of Moses? and that Moses should have given a (false) ethic doctrine as a substitute for an eternal truth?

(vi.) The Rabbis got over the difficulty by attaching the words, "*of them that hate me*," not to the fathers, but to *the children* themselves. The sins of their fathers will be visited upon them *if they also transgressed God's law* (comp. Lev. xxvi. 39; Is. lxv. 7; Matt. xxiii. 29–32). Thus the Targum of Onkelos adds here, "*if the children continue to sin like their fathers.*" Archbishop Leighton does indeed object that this surely cannot be all that is here intended, since it would be an obvious truism. Nevertheless, this makes the passage exactly analogous to Lev. xxvi. 39, 40—"And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away. *And they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers.* If they will confess *their* iniquity *and* the iniquity of their fathers

with them (i.e., *as well as of themselves*) with their trespass which they trespassed against Me, and that *also they have walked contrary to Me* . . . if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity, then . . . I will remember the land." We have the same allusion to the punishment of *guilty* children with their guilty fathers in Is. lxv. 7. "I will recompense your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the Lord."

(vii.) Probably, however, the words refer to the observed laws of God's moral governance of the world.

a. Men like Achan "do not perish alone in their iniquity." Many perish in the rebellion of Korah in spite of the deprecating cry, "Should one man sin, and will God be wroth with the whole congregation?" Israel is not saved from the pestilence, though David pleads, "These sheep, what have they done?" There is a terrible *solidarity* in evil. "*On ne fait rien tout seul, et il ne nous arrive rien tous seuls*," says Mme. de Charrière, and the sentence is an unconscious repetition of Seneca's *Nemo errat uni sibi;* and of Horace's *Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.* The sins of generations create an atmosphere of guilt for those that follow.

Material consequences fall on the innocent, moral responsibility does not. No one has insisted on the truth more strongly than George Eliot. She writes:

"Consequences are unpitying. Our deeds carry their terrible consequences, quite apart from any fluctuations that went before—consequences that are hardly ever confined to ourselves. And it is best to fix our minds on that certainty, instead of considering what may be the element of excuse for us. . . . There is no sort of wrong deed

of which a man can bear the punishment alone; you can't isolate yourself, and say that the evil which is in you shall not spread. Men's lives are as thoroughly blended with each other as the air they breathe. Evil spreads as easily as disease."

β. We can see further that this law of retribution is intended for the education of the race. Being the general experience it constitutes one of the most powerful barriers against wrong-doing. And although the innocent seem to suffer for the deeds of their fathers, the trials thus caused belong only to the general sorrow of human life. They leave each individual soul to work out its own salvation. Even a heathen could write, "If a wicked father begets a virtuous son—as sometimes sickly parents have healthy children—God remits to such a son the punishment which was destined to the race, because he has now, as it were, passed over from the family of vice to that of virtue. But if the soul retains the (internal) resemblance with the corrupted family, then he must certainly take upon himself the punishment of vice also, like an inherited debt." *

The apparent contradictions of Scripture on this subject are thus seen to be statements of complementary truths. Whatever interpretation we give to this menace of the second commandment, it cannot be interpreted into flagrant contradiction with the following passages:—

"That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; . . . *that be far from Thee; shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*"—Gen. xviii. 25.

"The fathers shall not be put to death for the children,

* Plutarch, "De sera Numinis vindicta." See Kalisch, "Exodus," p. 349.

neither shall the children be put to death for the father. *Every man shall be put to death for his own sin.*"—Deut. xxiv. 16.

"But the children of the murderer he (Amaziah) slew not, according to that which is written in the law of Moses."—2 Kings xiv. 6.

"In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. *But every one shall die for his own iniquity;* every man that eateth the sour grapes, *his* teeth shall be set on edge."—Jer. xxxi. 30.

"Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die.* When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live. *The son shall not* bear the iniquity of the father. . . . The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not My ways equal? are not your ways unequal?"—Ezek. xviii. *passim.*

III. "*And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.*"

It is obvious at a glance that the clause so translated is not parallel to the preceding one. The true translation is showing mercy unto *a thousand* (generations), as in Deut. vii. 9: "The faithful God which keepeth covenant, and mercy with them that love Him, and keep His commandments *to a thousand generations.*"

"And in this," says Bishop Hopkins, "mercy glorifies itself against justice; in that He showeth mercy unto *thousands* (of generations), but visiteth iniquity only unto

the third and fourth generation." "By a vast proportion," says Barrow, "the expressions of God's mercy do exceed those of justice, though both insisting on like and correspondent grounds."

I cannot better conclude these notes on a question which has received many answers than in the words of Dr. Ogden:

"We submit then, after much disputing on a dark subject; after much disputing, perhaps darker: we submit, Lord, ourselves to Thee; our conduct to Thy command, and our blind reason and wordy wisdom to Thy heavenly light. The very sentiments of truth and gratitude which are inspired by Thy unnumbered mercies, we temper with reverence and godly fear. Thy goodness we cannot search to its source, but we are sure we have not deserved it; and Thy judgments, if they fall on our head, will only descend upon the guilty."

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